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Australia Downs Samoa 11-0

Australian striker, Damian Mori is foiled by Fijian goalkeeper Shammal Kumar during their crunch game in Coffs Harbour last Saturday.

DEFEATED: Nicky Salapu, American Samoan goalkeeper lying on the turf in despair after letting in yet another goal in his team's 31-0 slaughter by Australia last week. The scoreline is now a World Record in International Soccer history.

By John Economos

AUSTRALIA's World Cup team last night completed its first round of the Oceania Qualifiers undefeated in four games at Coffs Harbour when our national team defeated Samoa 11-0 in the last match of Group 1.

Doubles scored by Aurelio Vidmar, David Zdrilic, Tony Popovic and Archie Thompson laid the solid foundations for Australia's lofty victory over the Pacific Island nation.

New Zealand still has to play in the Group 2, five nation Oceania Qualifying Tournament which doesn't start till June over in Auckland.

It's now more than likely that Australia will almost certainly play our arch neighbouring rivals New Zealand, on a home and away play-off to see who will go through from the Oceania phase and clash with the fifth best South American nation in November.

Australia scored a massive 66 goals and conceded none in its four Qualifiers.

A hostile, hungry Australian attack bombarded the Samoan goal area for almost the entire first session where Samoa's heroic goalkeeper, Molesi Tokuma, did a marvellous job to deny the 'Green and Gold' an avalanche of goals and keep the halftime scoreline down to just 3-0.

But Australia stepped up a gear in the second session to rain in another eight goals.

Experienced international midfielder Aurelio Vidmar opened the scoring for Australia as early as in the fifth minute when captain Kevin Muscat's cross into the box was headed on by striker Archie Thompson for Vidmar to slam into the target.

Striker David Zdrilic doubled the scoreline in the 27th minute when he nodded into the target a perfect cross from wide mobile midfielder Scott Chipperfield.

Australia right on halftime streaked to a 3-0 lead when a Simon Colosimo cross fell for Vidmar who set up Hayden Foxe to hit a deflected drive that hit the Samoan net.

Four minutes after the break Australia went to a 4-0 lead through Vidmar's second goal via a 25 metre free-kick before lanky central marker Tony Popovic headed in Australia's fifth goal in the 54th minute from a Simon Colosimo cross.

Right on the hour mark striker David Zdrilic scored his second to bring up the half dozen tally, tucking away a simple pass from fellow striker Damian Mori.

Thompson made it 7-0 in the 74th minute following excellent lead up work by Chipperfield then two minutes later Chipperfield himself made it 8-0 from a Thompson cross.

Thompson then scored his second of the match and Australia's ninth, after a great solo effort in the 78th minute.

A long ranged deflected drive in the 81st minute by Colosimo, flashed past the Samoan goalie for Australia's 10th goal.

Australia's line up against Samoa:

Goalkeeper: M. Petkovic.
Defence: Muscat, Moore, Popovic, De Amicis.
Midfielder: Colosimo, Foxe (Mori 46th), A. Vidmar, Chipperfield:
Strikers: Zdrilic, Thompson.

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Tony Popovic (left) and John Aloisi celebrating one of Australia's 31 goals against American Samoa which FIFA has now confirmed to be a world record.

IT'S OFFICIAL, IT'S A RECORD!

World Soccer's ruling body FIFA has confirmed the result of Australia's record-breaking defeat of American Samoa as 31-0 last week.

Confusion had surrounded the result of the Oceania zone World Cup qualifier, with the score originally announced as 32-0 to Australia. A Soccer Australia spokesman later said the result was in fact 31-0.

The result is an international record score, beating the previous mark also set last week Monday when Australia beat Tonga 22-0 in the first of their matches in the tournament.

A Soccer Australia spokesman said confusion about the score arose after the scoreboard apparently jumped from 28 to 30 goals late in the game.

"At the time there was a disallowed goal and an injury so that may have been where the confusion was," he said.

The score was originally given as 32-0 amid confusion at the ground after a glut of goals late in the game, played at the Australian east coast resort town of Coffs Harbour.

Australia set the previous record score two days earlier when they beat Tonga 22-0 in the Oceania zone group one qualifying tournament for the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation ABC Radio reported that FIFA was considering making smaller nations pre-qualify for World Cup qualifiers, given the two world records which were broken last week.

Cosmos get ministerial backing over NSL slot

By Graham Cooke

The ACT Minister for Sport, Bill Stefaniak, says the Government is willing to 'further support' the Canberra Cosmos' efforts to stay in the National Soccer League.

While not revealing details, Stefaniak said the matter had been discussed at Cabinet level and promised Chief Minister Gary Humphries would be in touch with Cosmos chairman Danny Moulis to discuss the details.

It was the one concrete development at a City Centre rally to protest against Soccer Australia's decision to oust the Cosmos from the NSL. Otherwise it was an opportunity to let loose the rhetoric, most of it aimed at the high officials of Soccer Australia.

Stefaniak himself said the decision to drop the Cosmos and possibly Brisbane Strikers from the competition was 'ridiculous' and that he was amazed to hear that one of the reasons for rejection was the club's financial state.

"The Cosmos, through the efforts of people like Danny Moulis, have got their act together and have produced an excellent season on and off the field," he said.

"What is the logic in exiling the city with the largest junior participation rate per head of population of anywhere in Australia? You can't have a national league without the participation of the National Capital."

Stefaniak said he would be willing to go to Sydney and meet with any member of Soccer Australia if that helped the Cosmos cause, an offer echoed by the Leader of the Opposition, John Stanhope.

"This is a bipartisan issue, and the Labor Party offers full support to the Government in every move it feels appropriate to ensure the club stays in the NSL," he said.

And Stanhope recalled his own son Matthew had once dreamed of being a soccer star when he played for junior club Belnorth during the 1980s.

"He was too slow to be a great player, but later he became a physio in Melbourne and is now the physio for the Melbourne Knights," he said.

"He goes everywhere with them, and has followed his dream of being involved in soccer at the highest level. He probably would not have had the dream if he had not had role models from the then Canberra City in the NSL."

Robin Poke, representing the Federal Shadow Minister for Sport, ACT Senator Kate Lundy, was scathing in his condemnation of Soccer Australia, his words bringing long and loud applause from the crowd of some 300 noisy and banner-waving supporters outside the popular watering hole of King O'Malley's Irish Pub.

"I would apply the same criteria to Soccer Australia as Soccer Australia applies to the Cosmos — are they a going concern?" he asked.

"I have been an observer of soccer since the early 1980s. Despite having the carriage of the most successful and popular sporting product in the world, Soccer Australia has failed time and again to establish a sound administration for its main competition.

"We have seen this league and that league, northern divisions and southern divisions — when was the last time you heard about a national marketing campaign, or a national major sponsor?

"I firmly believe that until Soccer Australia can put themselves on a sound administrative basis, there should be a moratorium on issues effecting the clubs in their constituency."

... kick against appeal time-limit

By Graham Cooke

Canberra Cosmos lodged their appeal against the decision to axe the club from the National Soccer League late on Thursday afternoon — and added a protest over the way the process is being conducted.

The club's team of lawyers, which have been assembled by chairman Danny Moulis, believe the short time allowed for the appeal is unfair, especially as Soccer Australia gave themselves three months to consider the original submission. A hearing has been scheduled for Melbourne today.

Moulis said the lawyers would ask the Appeals Board to simply prescribe procedural and information gathering methods at this hearing, rather than forcing the matter to be heard so quickly.

In the meantime, the lawyers have requested material from Soccer Australia relating to their constitution, statutory records, board meetings and the review committee's consideration of the club's application.

Moulis defended this aggressive approach as "not only for the defence of our interests, but also a signal of our resolve in this matter."

ALOISI OUT FOR TWO MONTHS

Australian international John Aloisi will expected to be out of action for one month after tearing a hamstring in Australia's 2-0 win over Fiji, last Saturday at Coffs Harbour.

The Coventry City, England striker was stretchered from the field during the Oceania World Cup qualifying game on Saturday after aggravating an injury that has plagued him all season.

Australiaís manager Frank Farina said on Sunday Aloisi would be sidelined for around a month.

"I feel really sorry for John actually, he's had one of those years," Farina said. "He'll be out for three or four weeks but he should be alright for the Confederations Cup (in May)."

Aloisi's injury is sure to intensify the friction between Farina and Coventry manager Gordon Strachan, who has insisted Australia didn't need Aloisi for the qualifying series.

The Scotsman attacked Farina's decision to call up Aloisi at a time when the English club are struggling to avoid relegation from the English Premier League.

Stratchan, along with Glasgow Rangers manager, Dick Advocaat, had argued that the Australian national side could make do with home-based players in the National Soccer League, since they were paired with South Pacific minnows such as Samoa, Fiji and American Samoa.

Aurelio Vidmar, a member of the Australian squad, laces boots for Rangers.

Both managers were eventuually vindicated in their separate arguuments as Australia steamrolled over its opponents ñ notching up unbelievable double figures in its games against American Samoa and Tonga.

Aloisi scored six goals in Australia's 22-0 win over Tonga last week. Aloisi missed Australia's 31-0 win over American Samoa before returning for the Fiji match, which Australia also won 2-0.

Coventry City were beaten 4-2 by Manchester City on Saturday to further take them nearer relegation for the first time since the English premiership started in 1990.

John Aloisi: Copped an unfortunate injury which will sideline him for one month.

New Boro role thrills Okon

Middlesbrough has just discovered what Australians have known for years — that Paul Okon is a world-class defender.

The Australian skipper dropped back from his customary midfield role to bolster Boro's back three in the second half against Sunderland earlier this week.

It was his first defensive assignment since arriving at The Riverside, and many of the locals didn't realise that at Marconi, then Club Brugge in Belgium, Okon excelled at the back.

"It was only when I went across to Italy and Lazio sold Roberto Di Matteo to Chelsea and we were needing a midfielder that they tried me in that position and I've stayed there ever since," Okon told the Boro official website.

"For me, it's just a case of shuffling back a few positions and I actually enjoyed it."

"Playing in that position gives you more time on the ball and a lot of people have said in the past that it's the position that suits me best, my ideal position," he says.

"Like any player will tell you, they're not too bothered where they play as long as they are in the team. But I'm familiar with that position and I actually enjoy it."

Okon is now heavily focused on helping Middlesborough escape the threat of relegation and has been given a lot more playing time since the arrival of his old national coach, Terry Venables.

Paul Okon: Relishing his new-found abilities at Middlesbrough.

Zdrilic dreams of England

Socceroos striker David Zdrilic has said that a move to the English Premier League would be a dream come true but has set himself the immediate goal of helping his Bundesliga club avoid relegation.

"It's a bit of a dream of mine. Like any kid coming from Australia we always want to get over to England but with these work permit problems it's the same for me and it's not looking the best at the moment," he said.

"As for Unterhaching I would like to stay there. I like the city of Munich and the problem that I have now is the system we play is very defensive and it doesn't really suit my style.

"We will have to see what happens. If we stay up in the first league (Bundesliga) and then I have to see what my options are."

Zdrilic believes the game in Germany is very tactical with the emphasis on nullifying the opponents.

"Its mostly just tactics but it's a lot of running as well, just like in England. But they really emphasise the tactical side of the game.

"You analyse the other players and tactics and you play your game according to the other team. That's how we play anyway."

Zdrilic hopes that an interrupted run of form will lift his profile and set himself up for a bright future in Europe.

"At the moment my aim is to have a season without any injuries. I have played in the Bundesliga now and I know I can play there and score goals.

"Hopefully I can get a season without any injuries and then look for a team that's playing in Europe and hopefully be successful there as well."

Unterhaching are currently third from bottom with five rounds remaining but have a game in hand over their fellow strugglers. The bottom three clubs are relegated.

David Zdrilic: Eager for a taste of English Premiership action.

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Despotovoski hits NSL Milestone

Bobby Despotovski: On the threshold of a historic 150th NSL outing this weekend.

Perth Glory's Bobby Despotovski is due to play his 150th NSL match this weekend. The Glory are home at Perth Oval on Sunday and take on the Melbourne Knights, who have Roddy Vargas due to play his 50th match for the Knights.

Levent Osman is due to play his 50th match for the Kingz FC this weekend. The Kingz come up against Canberra Cosmos at Ericsson Stadium on Friday.

This match marks NSL match number 500 for Melbourne Knights. The Knights entered the National League in 1984 and have competed in every season since.

The second next goal to be scored at North Sydney Oval will be the 100th goal scored at that venue. North Sydney Oval is the venue for the Northern Spirit v Parramatta Power match on Friday night.

For instance, Francis Awaritefe took just 203 games to score his first 90 NSL goals, an average of one goal every 2.3 games. Yet it took him another 52 games to reach career goal number 100, an average of one goal every 5.2 games.

Of the eleven NSL players who have scored 100 or more career NSL goals, Paul Trimboli is the player who has most prolonged stint - in terms of games played - in the 'nervous nineties' (65 games).

Newcastle United's Andrew Harper remains on 99 career goals going into this weekend's game against Sydney United. Yet it was way back on March 7, 1998 when he scored his 90th NSL goal (in his 252nd game).

And so this Sunday's away game against Sydney United will be Harper's 65th game since scoring his 90th goal.

If Harper plays and doesn't score against United, he will surpass Trimboli's 65 match run in the nervous nineties and then become the player with the longest stint in the nervous nineties.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA PREMIER LEAGUE

Adelaide, White City in barren draw

Adelaide Olympic and White City battled to a 0-0 draw in their Round 3 Premier League clash at the Thebarton Oval. It was the visitors that fired the first clear shot on goal in the 5th min., but a low shot was collected by Bauer in the Olympic goal. A minute later, Spatharos crossed the ball from the right but Pezos' spectacular volleyed attempt went over the bar.In the 9th min., a cross by Tsounis was headed straight to A.Stam in the Warriors goal.In the 13min., it was White City that put together a quick counter attack but the subsequent header went wide.

The Flames responded with an attack which only yielded it a corner.It was a relatively quiet opening with the composed Ivanovic quelling the pressure exerted by Olympic.In the 18 min., a dangerous cross by Mitchell was wasted when the White City strikers were unable to put it into the net.In the 20th min., Armour instigated a quick break but the visitors were again unable to capitalise on a promising move.The home fans were on their feet in the 22min., when a Spatharos piledriver was deflected out for a corner by Ivanovic.White City then created a good interpassing move that was also put out for a corner.In the 30th min., Olympic made two substitutions with P. Pezos and P. Apostolopoulos being

replaced by S. Parissos and P. Tsoukalas.These moves seemed to lift the unusually quiet Olympic.

A minute later, a good cross by N. Tsoukalas was almost put into the net by Parissos but his desperate lunge at the low hard cross ended in to the side netting. White City earnt a corner in the 33rd min., and Olympic replied with an attack which was cleared by a desperate clearance by Pavanello.The two teams finished the half with a corner to White City in the 43rd min., and a powerful N. Tsoukalas shot in the 44th min.which went wide for Olympic.

Olympic went on the attack from the beginning of the second half intent on breaking the

deadlock.In the 1st min., a dangerous low cross from the right by Parissos was

intercepted by A. Stam in the White City goal.A minute later it was Parissos who sent over a dangerous cross but the referee ruled the subsequent attacking effort was offside.Olympic were looking more menancing and in the 6th min.,Pappas went on a weaving run through the defence but he lost control at a critical moment and A. Stam was able to gather the ball. Moments later, Spatharos gathered the ball in midfield and ran at the White City defence before unleashing a long range shot which went wide. It was the visitors turn in the 8th min., but Berardino's shot went well wide.Olympic were exerting the pressure and this was characterised with a number of shots being blocked in the 11th, 12th and 14th minutes. In the 15th min., a forceful run through the midfield by Milosevic found

Parissos but his cross was cleared by the overworked White City defence.Seconds later, a Volis overlap was wasted when he blazed over the bar from a threatening position. A minute later, a Galanopoulos left wing cross was headed just over the bar by the lively Parissos.Olympic forced two corners in the 18th min., but again were unable to penetrate the well-drilled White City defence.

In the 19th min., it was the busy A. Stam that again intercepted a dangerous N. Tsoukalas cross. It was all Olympic and the hard running Parissos was causing problems, even for the normally unflappable Ivanovic.In the 26th min., a Pappas free kick was well saved by A. Stam. In the 31st min., a good interpassing move by Olympic was again wasted after N. Tsoukalas miscued his shot.

In the 35th min., the dangerous Spatharos went on a dangerous run but the ball was put out for yet another Olympic corner. Stam then saved another Pappas shot as the pressure on the visitors intensified. In the 36th min., Parissos headed over the bar after a well-flighted corner. In the 41st min., a dangerous-looking Tsounis corner was punched clear by A. Stam.White City created a quick counter attack after Olympic needlessly gave the ball away in the midfield, but were unable to capitalise. Just on the stroke of full time, Armour was sent off after an unnecessary second yellow card offence. The game ended in a scoreless draw much to the relief of the besieged White City.

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

SOUTHERN DIVISION - RD 25

LEADING GOALSCORERS

Name	Club	Goals
Steve Manceski	South Melbourne	26
Dimitri Tsiaras	South Melbourne Institute	19
Denis Mustac	Eastern Pride	16
Nick Waite	Carlton Peninsula Blues	13
Alef El Dib	South Melbourne Eagles Ac	12
Ben Cogger	Melbourne Knights	10
Robert Dolevski	Preston Lions	10

ROUND 26 FIXTURES

Saturday 21 April 2001
Preston Lions v South Melbourne Eagles Acad.
(BT Connor Reserve, 4 pm)

Sunday 22 April 2001
Peninsula Blues v Green Gully, (Lawton Reserve, 4 pm)
South Dandenong v Fawkner Blues, (George Andrews Reserve, 4 pm)
South Melbourne v Eastern Pride, (Bob Jane Stadium, 2 pm)

Wednesday 25 April 2001
Bulleen Zebras v Albury-Wodonga, (Veneto Club, 7 pm)
Bye v Melbourne Knights
Bye v VIS
Bye v Melbourne Knights Academy

By Roy Hay

South Melbourne 1 Melbourne Knights 2

Melbourne Knights beat South Melbourne Eagles Academy by two goals to one at Keilor Park on Saturday.

The referee said the opening goal in 15 minutes was an own goal, but Knights striker Ivan Gelemanovic claimed that he got the last touch.

There was no doubt about his second goal a cracker after 44 minutes. Spiro Antonosopoulos got a consolation goal for the Academy in 88 minutes, and he and his team-mates put a lot into this game.

Green Gully 2 Bulleen Zebras 1

Green Gully beat Bulleen Zebras by two goals to one at Green Gully Reserve on Saturday. An own goal conceded by Gully in 33 minutes gave Bulleen the edge in the first half, but the home team came roaring back in the second with a goal by Chris Greechan in 46 minutes.

From then until the end it was a tight as could be and most spectators had settled for a draw when Dean Vasic popped up with the Green Gully winner after 91 minutes.

Albury Wodonga 1 Preston Lions 0

Albury Wodonga Warriors recorded their fourth win of the season at home to a spirited Preston Lions.

It was a high standard game watched by the Victorian Soccer Federation Chairman Manny Galanos. Both sides created enough chances to have won half a dozen games, but while Preston could not put any of its away, David Afonso grabbed his opening in 72 minutes to give the Warriors an opportunity to celebrate. The heroes were the two keepers Josh Fluff for the Warriors and Goran Petrovski of the Lions, who kept their respective teams in the game with some outstanding saves.

Melbourne Knights1 South Melbourne 5

South Melbourne had too much all-round strength for Melbourne Knights Academy winning by five goals to one at Knights Stadium on Sunday.

Nick Tolios, who has been promoted from the Academy team opened the scoring in 12 minutes and Dimitri Tsiaras added a second in 32 before Dario Matkovic pulled one back for the Knights. In the second half Steve Manceski continued his impressive scoring run which now stands at 26 goals from 25 rounds in 55 minutes. Vince Lia took it to four in 62 minutes and Okan Simsek added the fifth just on time. Sam Kalakias and Misumi Nishida played well for the Academy as did lone striker Ivan Razov.

The VIS is back from its successful tour of Malaysia and will play Peninsula Blues on Monday. Fawkner Blues, South Dandenong and Eastern Pride had the byes.

Incidentally the Youth team from the Pride supported the action of their senior colleagues and only agreed to fulfill the away fixture against Canberra Cosmos to avoid sanctions being imposed on the club.

ROUND 24 RESULTS

Saturday 14 April 2001

South Melbourne	1
(Sprio Antonosopoulos)	
Melbourne Knights	2
(Ivan Gelemanovic 2)	
Green Gully	2
(Chris Greechan, Dean Vasic)	
Bulleen Zebras	1
(own goal)	
Albury-Wodonga	1
(David Afonso)	
Preston Lions	0

Sunday 15 April 2001

Melbourne Knights	1
(Dario Matkovic)	
South Melbourne	5
(Nick Tolios, Dimitri Tsiaras, Steve Manceski, Vince Lia, Okan Simsek)	

Monday 16 April 2001
V I S v Peninsula Blues
(The Grange Reserve, 4 pm)
Bye v Fawkner Blues
Bye v South Dandenong
Bye v Eastern Pride

LEAGUE LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Melbourne Institute	21	19	0	2	119	24	57
Eastern Pride	21	17	2	2	67	12	53
Melbourne Knights	22	15	1	6	62	24	46
VIS	22	12	4	6	54	35	40
Peninsula Blues	19	11	1	7	47	30	34
Melbourne Knights	20	10	1	9	26	32	31
South Dandenong	19	8	3	8	36	45	27
South Melbourne	21	8	2	11	34	46	26
Green Gully Cavaliers	22	7	4	11	29	42	25
Albury Wodonga	22	4	4	14	22	58	16
Bulleen Zebras	21	3	4	14	26	63	13
Fawkner Blues	21	4	1	16	31	72	13
Preston Lions	21	4	1	16	23	93	13

The Good Oil ... The Good Oil

By John Economos

WHO is the high-profiled Television Soccer identity, that following three long decades of heavy smoking, has finally given up that putrid habit some five months ago?

Well 'Good Oil' can assure you that our TV 'friend' is secretly well back-on the habit.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC's website this season has climbed to healthy levels of hits.

According to Olympic's General manager, Peter Raskopoulos, the Club's website averages 26,000 hits per week.

Recently, this level was broken and had climbed to 31,000 hits.

Peter Raskopoulos: Olympic's General manager.

WHILST Australia's unemployment rate has recently started to slowly creep in a northerly direction, Australian Soccer's unemployment rate, (in the NSL), is expected to rocket by the end of next month.

With the almost certain expected demise at the end of this season of the Canberra Cosmos and the Eastern Pride, some 35 NSL players could miss out on grabbing a club for next season.

And it doesn't end there.

Following the Northern Spirit's disappointing current season, Head coach Mickey Hickman, already has threatened he'll be wielding the axe,(or broom), through his dressing rooms at the end of four weeks.

Patience at the Spirit has run right out.

It's now expected, that at least eight Spirit players will be released by the end of next month.

The hierarchy at Marconi, as well, is believed not to have been too happy with the performances this season with many members of their playing staff.

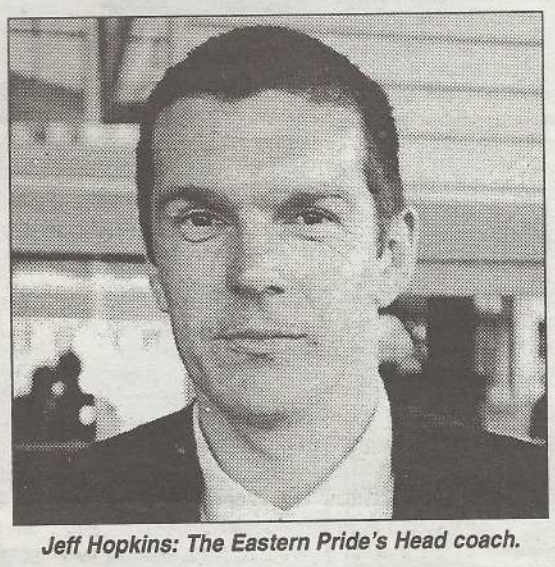
A 'clear-out sale' involving at least five or six players has already been muted around the 'Palace'

Compounding the expected 'unemployed NSL player crisis' is the introduction of the 12 Club format of the League for next season.

Should Soccer Australia stick to it, (and we only now believe that that may certainly be the case), it will mean one more club will be axed from the League.

This in turn automatically translates into at least another 16 NSL players are about to be dumped on the steadily rising scrap heap.

Thus far, we already, (notionally that is), are looking at around 65 players that will soon be joining the ranks of the 'unemployed'.



Jeff Hopkins: The Eastern Pride's Head coach.

THE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS' LEAGUE Second Quarter Final between Bayern Munich and Manchester United will be played tomorrow night, (Wednesday), at the Olympic Stadium in Munich.

The first leg was won by the Germans 0-1 at Old Trafford.

SBS-TV will screen a full replay of this game which promises to be a classic battle, this Thursday night at 10.30pm.

The Final of the Euro Champions' League which will be played on May 24th at the San Siro Stadium in Milan, Italy, will be televised Live by SBS from 4.15am (e.s.t.).

Other Cup Finals to be telecast Live next Month by SBS, are:

F.A. Cup Final, Arsenal vs Liverpool: May 12th, @ 10.30pm, (e.s.t.), Millennium Stadium, Cardiff, Wales.

UEFA Cup Final, May 17th, @ 10.00 pm from Westfalienstadion, Dortmund, Germany.

SBS Television has the exclusive free-to-air rights of the Champions' League.

A high-profiled NSL club administrator, is worried sick about the gambling habits of his very own NSL coach who seems to be daily 'handcuffed' to the 'poker-robots'.

This worry seems needless and hard to fathom.

Especially as the NSL club administrator, himself has a problem as a heavy gambler, but on the races, (computerised that is).

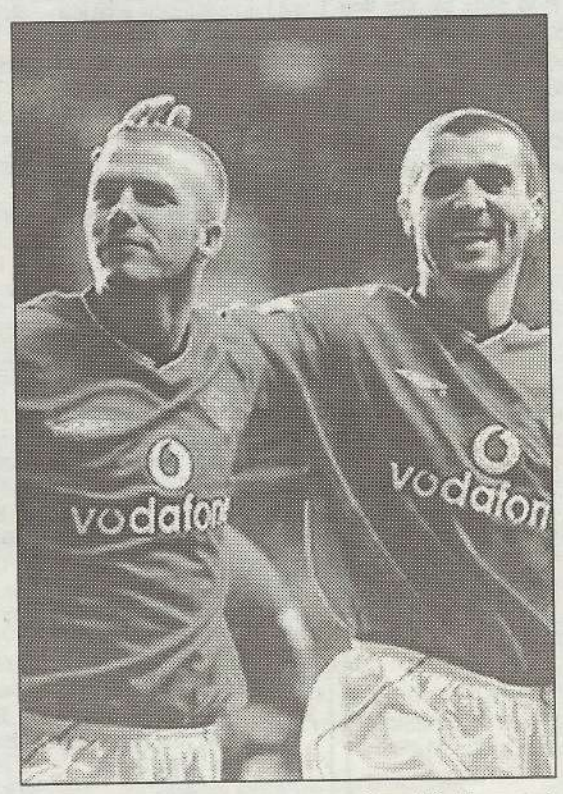
The concerned mystery NSL club administrator.

BOBBY DESPOTOVSKI, the Perth Glory's intelligent ace goalscorer, has edged ahead, (17 goals), in the NSL's Top Goalscorers charts. stakes

Bobby Despotovski: The Glory's lethal marksman.

The brilliant marksman added another to his tally last Saturday night at Perth Oval by scoring the sole goal of the game that ultimately proved enough to sink the Melbourne Knights.

With his strike-partner, Damian Mori, away with Frank Farina's National squad in Coffs Harbour, Despotovski leads the 'scorers' pack', one ahead of Mori, two ahead on Saso Petrovski and three in front of Ben Burgess.



Manchester United's twin dynamic midfielders and living legends, David Beckham being patted by his captain, Roy Keane.

Jimmy Baxter, Scotland's magnificent flank-midfielder, seen here being joyously embraced by supporters after Scotland had just defeated World Cup Champions, England, at Wembley Stadium 2-3 in August 1967.

JIMMY BAXTER, arguably one of Scotland's greatest midfielders, sadly past away last Saturday, aged 61.

Capped 34 times for Scotland, the former great international finally lost his biggest battle against the lethal sickness, cancer.

Playing for the mighty Rangers between 1960 and 1965, the great super-skilled Baxter won no less than three Scottish titles whilst at Ibrox.

A magnificent passer of the ball, Baxter had spells in England Club Soccer with Sunderland and Nottingham Forest.

The brilliant Baxter rated his real career highlight, Scotland's1967 battle at Wembley Stadium when the 'Dark Blues' defeated England 2-3.

This was England's first defeat, straight after Bobby Moore's lads had won the World Cup just the year before.

The flank-midfielder Baxter, prematurely retired at the age of 29.

His form and health had started to suffer from his high-flying style of living which unfortunately included gambling and drinking.

Baxter's funeral this week will be held in the Glasgow Cathedral.

The Scottish midfield legend leaves two sons, Alan 34 and Steven 32.

A real Icon of Soccer.

Jim Baxter, may you rest in peace.

NEWCASTLE UNITED is expected sometime this week to release the name of its new NSL coach for next season.

As has already been officially made clear, incumbent coach, Lee Sterrey, will not be re-appointed.

Officials at United refused to supply further information, but its believed that a short list of three coaches had their interviews completed by last Friday.

Rumours ran rife across Sydney over the past 48 hours. Sydney Olympic's Branko Culina has been strongly muted that he will be the successful, (yet most surprising), candidate as the new coach at Newcastle.

A Newcastle official late last week hinted that the coach in question, is currently employed by a team that is right now in the 'Top Six'.

Branko Culina: Olympic's coach rumoured for Newcastle next season.

BRIAN DOYLE, Australia's leading master of humour, last Wednesday entertained 200 businessmen and team-sponsors at Club Marconi.

As per usual, 'Ripper' killed them all with his 'Sahara-dry' and clever comedy, especially when he switched part of his routine into taking the 'Mickey' out of Marconi's Club President Mr Tony Labbozzetta.

Doyle's staccato of one-liners never allowed the audience time to recover.

At one stage Doyle expressed his feelings of serious sorrow for the glum and always unhappy-looking Federal Treasurer, Peter Costello.

"One evening at a hotel, Mr Costello was kindly asked to leave the premises so that they could start 'Happy Hour'," Doyley delivered

Brian Doyle, comedian extraordinaire, seen here with Club Marconi President, Mr Tony Labbozzetta.

Pablo Cardozo (left): In the thick of action for Sydney Olympic.

Pablo Cardozo

My name is a problem

By Daniela Raco

With uncanny vision and a steel-like resolve to win the ball, Sydney Olympic's creator of goals Pablo Cardozo gives his team a balanced touch.

He is the complete player with still unfulfilled potential — an attractive quality given that success as a soccer player is never guaranteed.

The man with the swarthy good looks shows us how to whoop it up off the pitch — and what credentials are necessary to achieve success on it.

Like any good player, as your name and reputation grows as being one of the leagues most potent centre-forwards, it will become increasingly more difficult to score because of the tighter marking. Do you agree?

Absolutely, because you become the focus of opponents and they pay more attention to you and are more aware of how much damage you can cause. But, this will hopefully leave others free to create chances.

You have always been in the wrong place at the wrong time for Australian representative duty — at any level. Is this something that motivates you — the chance to prove to selectors that you can hold your own at an elite level?

No, because if it's meant to be/it will be. If you are chosen, it's ultimately the decision of the selectors no matter where you are based in the world.

You spent six months playing with Rapid Vienna in the Austrian First Division and 6 months with Greek First Division side Athinaikos. With so many of Australia's top footballers plying their trade overseas, is the creative talent of Pablo Cardozo likely to again leave our shores at the seasons end?

If the right offer comes along, or perhaps the league will become financially better off and we can all stay here!

To be a good footballer, you have to be able to play in any position. Pablo, you are a proven 'centre-forward', but have you ever thought about popping on the gloves and trying your hand in goals?

No. It's too depressing, and too far away from where I like to be. I'll probably start scoring, or turn around in a solo dribble.

You were born in Argentina and have spent all but the first two-and-a-half years of your life in Australia. Are you Australian-made?

Obviously the blood is South American, but I've lived here all my life. In a way, I was almost born here. The name doesn't help — I can't go overseas and say I'm Australian, and then introduce myself as Pablo Cardozo!

You are equally adept with either foot. Is this a natural talent, or just many hours of practice?

I like to think it's natural.

You didn't take up club soccer until the age of eleven. As a youngster your first choice sport was actually tennis. What were you thinking?

Millions of dollars. I probably started because some of my close friends played. Professional tennis isn't a bad choice, especially the thought of playing doubles with Anna Kournikova.

What are the qualities of a good coach?

A coach must be honest , positive and lenient towards his players. He must also have good communication skills, and be able to treat his players individually.

Cardozo poses with Daniela

In one word describe Branko Culina.

The Man? There's no word that could describe him.

The Coach? Meticulous

Is there a soccer player that you model your game on?

Not really. I pick and choose from different players around the world. The game used to be more skilful, now it's more defence-minded.

You bear an uncanny resemblance to a Latin version of Elvis Presley. Do you laugh off the comparison, or take it as a complement?

Both. Hopefully I resemble the young version.

It is important to have a balance to be able to play well on the park. What are some of Pablo Cardozo's off-field pastimes?

During summer I like going down to the beach and just hanging out with friends. Off the park, I try to forget about the game — so I can go back fresh.

What animal (or thing) best describes your personality?

A Lion. I'm laid-back and relaxed. I don't tend to stress and I'm quite direct. A bit like King of the Jungle — I like to rule. I like things done the right way.

Who is the last person you would like to be stuck in an elevator with?

Marilyn Manson.

What gourmet cuisines can you whip up in the kitchen?

South American barbeques!!

Who inspires you?

Anyone who does something freakish, like Thorpe, Tiger Woods, or Michael Jordan. These are people who succeed day-after-day.

Which team mate could do with a new wardrobe?

Scott Baillie — not renowned for his Calvin Klein underwear.

What is the best (or perhaps worst) excuse you've heard someone use for missing training?

Alex Duric — he went fishing.

What's the first thing you do when you arrive home?

Whack the stereo on.

If you were to star in a Hollywood movie, who would be your leading lady?

It's a toss up between Denise Richards or Latica Casta.

Do you know of any pre-match mishaps (missing strips, missing players, two left boots, etc.)?

Players have left their shin pads at home, and used plastic during a game.

Do you have a favourite Sydney nitespot?

'Cargo', on the other side of Darling Harbour.

What is your favourite late-nite snack?

Kababs — Sydney's renowned for all the caravan sites.

What are the best ingredients for a good nite out?

Good music, good people, and no troublemakers.

Which teammate is likely to walk past Hungry Jacks and feel compelled to walk in?

Paul Kohler — one of the younger guys.

Which member of your squad is most likely to be caught dancing on a podium at a niteclub?

Damion Collina (tries to impress), and Nick Carle (the dancer).

If you were invisible, what's the first place you would sneak into?

FBI headquarters.

Complete this sentence, 'Love Is?'

Hard to find, and harder to keep.

If you could have box seats at any event in the world, what would it be?

Courtside at an old Chicago Bulls game when Jordan was playing.

What is the biggest misconception about sportsmen?

That we are all the same.

Which member of your squad would top Cleo's Most-Eligible Bachelor List?

Ante Juric, because he's popular with the ladies.

Where would you rate?

I wouldn't make the final cut.

What is the one thing in your bedroom, you keep well-hidden from your mother?

Everything in there is normal.

Do you have a winning technique for scoring off the park?

I'm not one to chase.

What would you consider to be a romantic night out?

If you're with the right person, it doesn't matter where you are or what you're doing.

If you could have any supernatural power what would it be?

To know what people are thinking.

How would you spend your last $50?

Put it on luck, and hope for the best.

SOCCER WOMAN

BY JANENE MAR

Matildas' World Record

All this talk of world records... The Socceroos made world headlines last week with their world record 22-0 win over Tonga in the Oceania Group 1 World Cup Qualifiers, which they promptly smashed with a 31-0 victory over American Samoa two days later.

Well, don't forget, the Matildas also hold a world record (the current Guinness Book of Records lists the women's highest international score separately).

The Matildas defeated (alas again) American Samoa 21-0 on 9 October 1998 in the opening match of the Oceania World Cup Qualifiers in Auckland. In defence of American Samoa, it was their first ever international match.

Not to be outdone, New Zealand equalled the scoreline in the very next match that day, 21-0 versus Samoa.

In fact, oddly enough, a total of four women's national teams share the 21-0 record. Japan was first when they defeated Guam in December 1997, followed by Canada who defeated Puerto Rico in August 1998.

We would love to officially confirm whether the Matildas' total of ten different goalscorers in the one international match is also a world record. The Socceroos reached 9 scorers in the Tonga match, and 7 versus American Samoa.

Some people may look upon it all as a farce, to win by such a huge scoreline. But look at it from the other angle. That is the beauty of football, the world game.

That the smallest of nations can proudly compete in the number one event - the World Cup - alongside the bigger name countries, albeit in the qualifying stages.

You can be assured, the little country (population a mere 60,000), previously unheard of to so many, has won their share of friends. American Samoa has hit the world headlines across the globe, and although on the losing side, there are many who endear themselves to the underdog.

Matildas' players before a recent game.

WUSA DREAM UNFOLDS

On the other side of the world, a long-held dream has just unfolded with last Saturday's kickoff of the WUSA, the American women's professional league.

Pioneers of women's soccer have worked long and hard in what is essentially only a young sport to see this day come to fruition.

USA —who unbelievably only contested their first international in 1985 — has been the champion of promoting the game to their own public and the world, and they have achieved many milestones along the way.

Their win in the inaugural World Cup in 1991 was known to precious few outside the immediate women's soccer circles, both the world over and at home in the US.

This became the catalyst for the Americans to work at putting women's soccer on the map, where it belonged. With the game at heart, these people dared to dream and take risks.

Apart from those two World Cup crowns and an Olympic gold medal, their ongoing efforts off the field consequently resulted in world record crowds at the inaugural women's Olympic final (Atlanta 1996), then wildly surpassed all imaginable records with the groundbreaking staging of the World Cup in 1999.

The 8-team WUSA league features not only their own World Cup and Olympic champion athletes, but has attracted the very best from around the world. This is not the first women's professional league, but it is certain to create the biggest impact on the game the world over.

FREEDOM TAKE FIRST POINTS

Australia's one direct link to the league — Matildas striker Julie Murray playing in Bay Area CyberRays' colours — was involved in the historic day, when the CyberRays played away to Washington Freedom last Saturday afternoon, the very first WUSA match, and the only fixture for the weekend.

Murray was a starting eleven member before the higher than expected crowd of 34,148 which turned out at RFK Stadium in Washington DC for the extravaganza.

The game was billed as a clash between the sport's two most well-known names - Mia Hamm's Washington against Brandi Chastain's CyberRays. After a scoreless 70 minutes, it was a controversial incident between the pair which resulted in Washington's match-winning goal and 1-0 victory.

Hamm, returning from a pre-season shoulder injury, was moved to the right flank in midfield for the match, and consequently battled with left side defender Chastain. Hamm, quiet for much of the match, beat Chastain and forged into the box, before Chastain recovered and slid in to steal the ball. Referee Sandra Hunt ruled it a foul, and Pretinha converted from the spot.

CyberRays had been the more dangerous in attack, but found themselves up against a superbly in-form Freedom keeper Siri Mullinix, voted player of the match. Three minutes after the goal, Brazilian Sissi was unlucky not to equalise, her freekick smacking the right post.

Oceania World Cup Qualifiers ... Oceania World Cup Qualifiers

Australian striker Aurelio Vidmar (middle) watches his shot zoom past American Samoan goalkeeper Nicky Salapu.

AUSTRALIA 31 AMERICAN SAMOA 0

Australia produced a world record breaking display to defeat American Samoa 31-0 in Group One of the Oceania World Cup Qualifiers at the Coffs Harbour International Stadium last Wedsnesday.

The result stands as the highest winning margin in an international football fixture.

Archie Thompson was the pick of the scorers netting a world record 13 goals for the game, while David Zdrilic also scored freely with eight.

Australian Coach, Frank Farina, wasn't getting carried away with the amazing feat, just pleased about the result and professional manner with which his team played.

"It's a result and really, that's all that matters, we now move onto Fiji, and as I said prior to the tournament, the aim was to win all four games," he said.

"I was pleased again with the professional attitude of the players, the way they went about it was in a very professional manner, and that, from my point, is the most pleasing aspect of the whole night."

The highly religious America Samoan team, ranked last (203rd) on the FIFA World Ranking list, sang harmonious song's before the game in a bid for team bonding, which seemed to work for the first ten scoreless minutes of the game.

However, after a Con Boutsianis corner swung in on ten minutes, there was only ever going to be one team singing in this game.

The next three minutes produced three more goals to Thompson, Zdrilic and Aurelio Vidmar respectively. And this was followed by 12 more before half time to leave the Australian team up 16-0.

The second half saw no relief to the onslaught as the manual score attendant would attest to, changing the numbers after every three minutes on average.

Archie Thompson completed his 13 goal haul in the 88th minute and was joined on the scorers list by David Zdrilic, Aurelio Vidmar, Tony Popovich, Con Boutsianis, Simon Colosimo and Fausto De Amicis.

The young Marconi striker was honoured to be a part of the record winning team.

"It's obviously great scoring goals, and being part of a world record is an honour," he said .

"At halftime I was told about the record, but... we're out there to do a job, and I'm just happy to score goals, against any opposition."

The result, which follows a 22-0 drubbing over Tonga, has only strengthened calls for a change to the Oceania qualifying system which would see the smaller nations pre-qualify. A move which FIFA will look to implement in the future to prevent such embarrassing and ill-balanced games from re-occuring.

AUSTRALIA 31

(C Boutsianis 10' 50' 84', A Thompson 12' 23' 27' 29' 32' 37' 42' 45' 56' 60' 65' 85' 88', D Zdrilic 13' 21' 25' 33' 58' 66' 78' 89 , A Vidmar 14' 80', T Popovic 17' 19', S Colosimo 51' 81', F de Amicis 55')

AMERICAN SAMOA 0

Venue: Coffs Harbour International Sports Stadium, Coffs Harbour, Australia.

Referee: Ronan Leaustic (Tahiti)

Yellow Cards: nil

AUSTRALIA: Michael Petkovic (gk); Kevin Muscat, Craig Moore, Tony Popovic (Fausto de Amicis 46'), Tony Vidmar (Scott Miller 46'), Simon Colosimo, Aurelio Vidmar Steve Horvat, Con Boutsianis, Archie Thompson, David Zdrilic.

AMERICAN SAMOA: Nicky Salapu (gk); Mexico Lisi Leututu (Richard D Mariko 50'), Soe Falimaua, Levaula Fatu, Sulifou Faaloua, Travis Pita Sinapati, Baby Mulipola, Pati Feagiai, Ben Falaniko (Darrell Ione 84'), Tiaoali'l Savea, Young Im Min.

Other Game on Wednesday 11th:

FIJI 6

(U Mateiwai 6', M Masi 21', 41', A Prasad 48' 81', S Lal 85')

SAMOA 1

(B Lemana pen 33')

Venue: Coffs Harbour International Sports Stadium, Coffs Harbour, Australia.

Referee: Harry Atisson (Vanuatu)

Yellow Cards: SAMOA: R Faaisuaso 72'

Red Cards: FIJI: M Masi 67',

FIJI LINE-UP: Isikeli Sevanaia (gk); Valerio Nasema, Manoa Raiyawa Masi, Emois Baleinuku, Shailemdra Lal, Esala Masi, Jope Namawa Leka, Ulaiasi Radike Mateiwai (Atnesh Prasad 46'), Ratu Apenisa Roluvenisoba, Malakai Kainihewe (Leone Vurukania 85'), Josaia Sauturaga (Abinesh Sailesh Samy 46').

SAMOA LINE-UP: Molesi Tokuma (gk); Faimasasa Falilu, Dominic Gabriel (Sale Sua-mili 72'), Pualele Lemana, Philipo Bureta, Peko Victor, Ambrose Asafo, Etena Tokuma, Richmond Faaisuaso, Junior Michael, Ben Lemana (Peniamina Timo 57').

❑❑❑❑

AUSTRALIA 2 FIJI 0

By Alan Clark

Australia effectively wrapped-up its Group One qualifying phase with a two-goal victory over Fiji, with still a game to play.

Steve Corica's opener midway through the first half was enough to keep Australian nerves from being over-stretched, but it wasn't until defensive midfielder Hayden Foxe put away the second, nine minutes from time, that the game was safe.

The Socceroos played the last five minutes with just ten men, as striker John Aloisi was stretchered from the field after injuring a hamstring as he lunged for a third goal.

Farina can expect a call from Aloisi's Coventry City manager Gordon Strachan, who was unhappy at Aloisi's international call-up, and now will be fuming at the injury.

Socceroo coach Frank Farina had also upset his Fijian opposite number Billy Singh when he predicted the Fijians would come out "kicking, punching, and brawling" against Australia, but by game-time Singh had a greater grievance. He insisted that his team be re-allocated into a different change-room.

"Something (in the room) was stinking bad. We thought it was a ploy of the Australians," he said.

Furthermore, an official who insisted that the Fiji team move from its bench following the team entering the pitch had irked Singh, so his mood during the game was even more pugnacious than normal.

This did not translate to the way his side played — the first and only booking occurred six minutes from time, and the game - although fiercely competitive - was played well within the laws of the game.

Farina was happy with the win, even if the goal-feasts of the previous two outings were not to be repeated. "I don't think it was very pretty, but we got what we were after."

Corica started and finished the move that lead to the opening goal for Australia. Corica had won a ball in midfield, and laid it off to John Aloisi with a clever flick. Aloisi in turn sent the ball wide left to Con Boustianis and the winger ran with the ball to the bye-line before sending in a cross. Aloisi won a challenge with Sevanaia who had come out to claim the ball. Aloisi's header was blocked by Sevanaia and rebounded to Corica who struck a left foot shot high into the net.

Foxe popped up in the penalty-box to hook home the second from a corner. Archie Thompson had combined with Corica, allowing Corica to cut inside and cross to Scott Chipperfield's head. Chipperfield's nod-on fell for Foxe at the penalty-spot who turned and blasted into the net.

Shortly before the second goal came a most bizarre incident. Chasing the game one goal in arrears, Singh asked his goalkeeper Isikeli Sevanaia to hold possession of the ball which the imposing keeper did for almost two minutes.

There was no reason for an Australian player to challenge for the ball — a draw would likely see them end up as Group winners — but eventually Aloisi did, racing in just as Sevanaia finally picked up the ball. Aloisi clipped Sevanaia as he came in, sparking a few moments where Fijian tempers seemed likely to boil over. Eventually, order was restored, but the tactic was puzzling.

Singh explained his reasons at the after-match media conference. "(My players) were tired and I wanted to give them a rest. We were against a super team from Europe."

Australia's Damian Mori (left) dribbles past Fijian defender Dawai Toma.

Oceania Group 1 Table As At 15.04.2001

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
Australia	3	3	0	0	55	0	55	9
Fiji	3	2	0	1	19	3	16	6
Tonga	3	2	0	1	6	22	-16	6
Samoa	3	1	0	2	9	7	2	3
American Samoa	4	0	0	4	0	57	-57	0

YESTERDAY'S MATCHES

Australia vs Samoa; Tonga vs Fiji; American Samoa bye.

Fijian striker Marika Namaqa (right) challenges Australian midfield maestro Lindsay Wilson during their crunch clash last Saturday.

AUSTRALIA 2

(Corica 22, Foxe,79).

FIJI 0

Venue: Coffs Harbour International Sports Stadium, Coffs Harbour Crowd: 5,500

Referee: Derek Rugg (New Zealand)

Cautions: Namaqa (84).

Red Cards: (none)

AUSTRALIA: Bolton, Muscat (c), Moore, Popovic, T Vidmar, Wilson (Colosimo 53), Foxe, Corica, Boutsianis (Chipperfield 65), Mori (Thomspon 70), Aloisi.

FIJI: Sevanaia, Leka, Nasema, Roluvenisoba, Toma (Kainihewe 80), Vurukania (Samy 84), Baleinuku, Sauturaga, Namaqa, Mateiwai (Lal 87), E Masi.

Letters to the Editor

Pride's farcical display

Dear Sir,

I found it less than amusing that the Canberra Cosmos annihalated Easter Pride 7-1 penultimate weekend.

Why, you may ask?

I think it is an absolute joke that a National Soccer League team runs out a youth team in place of their first grade side because of a players strike.

Where else in the world would such nonsense occur??

Jeff Hopkins: Eastern Pride coach.

It is another slap in the face to Australian soccer, and an uppercut to the jaw for its governing body, Soccer Australia.

Would it not have made more sense for the Pride to forfeit the game instead of handing Canberra a positive six goal margin?

Now imagine if either Sydney Olympic, the Wollongong Wolves or Perth Glory had been "gifted" these valuable goals in a three horse race for second place.

It might have made the difference for one of these clubs, qualifying them for a home semi-final all because of the lack of professionalism shown by not only the club (Eastern Pride), but also the organisers who let this farce occur.

I commend the bravery of the youngsters that took place in this ill-fated game but seriously question the "superiors" who let this farce occur.

The fans have had a gutful!!!

J. Mezzano
Richmond, VIC

John Hutchinson: Eastern Pride defender, who was part of the boycott of the Cosmos game.

No to 12-team league structure

Dear Sir,

If the Soccer Australia board want a relatively smooth competition, without the threat of a breakaway league, it needs to go with a 14 team competition not 12.

The reason is that they will look to be making progress and not just cutting or trimming three teams from the competition.

As we all know there are three or four new consortium's waiting to enter the national competition, but they won't be able to enter if it's only going to be a 12 team comp.

So my suggestion is cut three or even four teams by all means (Canberra, Sydney United, Eastern Pride and Brisbane Strikers are my pick) then add three new ones to take their place.

The new ones could be Brisbane Lions, South Coast Eagles (for Adelaide), plus another one for Perth.

That won't fix everything in the game, but it will be at least an improvement on the twelve team alternative, particularly if at least two out of the three newcomers are as successful as the Perth Glory.

A well balanced geographical spread of teams (two in each Aussie Rules state, four in Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, Brisbane and a New Zealand side in Wellington fit the bill), would avoid any further talk of a radical breakaway rebel competition, which would be very painful and perhaps even damaging to the game, something that has already happened in Rugby League even though soccer is a completely different situation.

All I will say is don't let this opportunity slip away.

Dominic Scullino
Nerang, QLD

Plight of Soccer in Newcastle

Dear Sir,

The records will show that 20,000 not 27,000 people attended the APIA-HELLENIC match at the old Sydney Sports Ground in 1963.

Undoubtably the era between 1957-64 was indeed a golden era for Sydney and Wollongong soccer.

However in reality it was like a new house built with rickety foundations. As you mentioned, the clubs then were over dependent on cheap star imports, the supply of which ultimately dried up.

The district clubs of that era were generally poorly run, underfunded and except Canterbury, poorly supported. The dominant ethnic clubs (who all bar one, no longer exist) could not connect with the mainstream community just like today's ethnic NSL clubs.

During his long reign, Sir Arthur George, may well have presided over a catalogue of disasters but singling him out for the shortcomings of the NSL in its formulative years is unfair.

Frank Lowly (Mr Westfield) and others were the real driving force behind the formation of the NSL in 1977.

In conclusion the biggest failing of soccer administrators in NSW during the sixties was the inability to bring about reconciliation between Sydney's (new ground) and Newcastle's (old ground).

The split that occurred in 1956 was probably unavoildable given the structure of soccer in Australia that had existed since 1900.

The situation where both the key Australian and NSW Soccer Associations were based in Sydney but controlled by Newcastle interests was untenable with the influx of many soccer minded migrants after World War II.

Unlike now, Newcastle soccer in the Sixties was still very healthy and formidable. Combined with the then energised Sydney soccer setup, and Wollongong, they could have made soccer in NSW into a real force that could have advanced the cause of soccer across Australia.

Instead they were at each others throats, with Newcastle soccer the biggest loser.

R. Melor
Bondi, NSW

NSL needs a second division urgently

Dear Sir,

In response to Claudio Barbato's letter (10/04/01), I think he has some very valid points.

Why can't Soccer Australia (SA) introduce a second division?? Australian soccer is desperately crying out for one.

Not only would the season be more exciting, as there would be a battle at both ends of the table, but it would give the opportunity of promotion for new teams, maybe a Blacktown City, Green Gully or Western Knights, and get rid of the Eastern Prides from a competition that should never really be in.

I think alot of these new teams could survive financially if SA didn't suck their every last penny dry through affiliation fee and God knows what else.

It will surely attract the promoters dollars and would encourage Channel Seven to show more soccer at more prominent timeslots, especially seeing that they are looking for a replacement to the AFL.

This would also drum up greater national interest as more teams will be supported from a larger population base.

SA Chairman, Tony Labbozetta, commented on SBS's "On the Ball" program before the elections that this was simply not possible because he believed alot of the new ventures wouldn't have the financial infrastructure. Well then why charge a $50,000+ affiliation fee if he believes the clubs are under — financed???

Every major footballing power around the world has more than one national division and I don't believe we can go to the next level without this.

I also believe an FA Cup style competition with regional and State League teams would be a bonus for the game if it was marketted properly. I know if a team like Perth Glory were to front up against my local State League team it would be a sell-out.

There is no real point in having a cup competition with only NSL teams (Johnnie Walker Cup) because it would just overshadow the National Soccer League.

There are so many initiatives that could make Australia's most played game, the most lucrative and best supported.

If only a few "Corporate Refugees" could pull their fingers out, stop thinking about lining their golden back pockets and start doing their jobs.

N. King
Epping, NSW

Zelic's unfortunate remark

Dear Sir,

I was very saddened and hurt by the alleged remarks made by Ned Zelic which appeared in the local press a few days ago.

It's almost unbelievable that after wearing the Green and Gold on so many occasions, this talented player could express himself in such a vitriolic manner.

Under these circumstances, the only chance of seeing Zelic wearing our famous colours will occur if Soccer Australia can induce him to have a full blood transfusion.

Ron Novello
Little Bay, NSW

Ned Zelic

Who cares about Zelic?

Dear Sir,

It was a shame to read in the *Herald Sun* of the Friday the 30th of March 2001, that Ned Zelic does not care if the Socceroos do not qualify for the 2002 World Cup.

Well Ned what can one say, we care, all Soccer fans in Australia.

You always thought fhighly of yourself, but then where are you playing? At 1860 Munich, Not Bayern Munich, Real Madrid, Manchester Utd, Milan. Any idea of how many players there are like you in South America; they come cheaper, by the bunch.

About playing for Croatia I don't think that can happen now, but you can always go and live there. Would you like that Ned?

There's a lot of players in this world, names that are bigger than the game, but the ones who will be most remembered are the ones who play on the World stage in the World Cup. The question is not whether Australia makes it to the World Cup in Japan and Korea, but will you ever be on that stage?

J. Muscat,
Airport West. VIC.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,
To all our most valued readers, please take serious note of the following:
a) As from our very next issue, ABSW has been forced to remind you all, that your letters in future must be very concise, sharp and to the point.
(This in future will be very strictly enforced).
b) Over the past four months or so, we have been receiving far too many letters that, (most regrettably), have been ridiculously lengthy which has forced us to scrap them.
c) It goes without saying, ABSW will NOT publish any material sent in that is blatantly defamatory, irrespective whether the reader's opinion has merit or not.
d) Please keep your letters as intelligent free of malice and clear as possible, correctly researching your facts before putting pen to paper.
e) "Letters To The Editor" received AFTER any Friday, will NOT be published in the following week's edition of ABSW.
Therefore send your letters in early ... Please.
f) Full name, address and contact number MUST also be included on all letters submitted.
Yours in Sport,
ABSW - Editor.

What's the problem with Zeljko Babic?

Dear Sir,

I'm hoping you can help me with some info.

Marconi striker Zeljko Babic returned months ago from Belgium after an injury laden spell with Belgian side St Truiden. I am told that this injury is no longer a problem and that he is 100% fit, why then have we not seen him.

He has trained with the other boys for weeks now and I'm sure Eddie Krncevic, the coach would love to see him in his squad right now.

He needs him!

Could there be a problem, maybe to do with his contract?

The fans want answers and we are not getting them.

Linda
Babic fan.

Babic: Where is he now?

OFF THE CROSSBAR

By Allan Crisp

OWEN PAYS HIS DUES

"Banana bender" Owen Filewood has reached the magical age of 21 and is looking to earn the key of the National Soccer League door.

A Queensland Academy of Sport graduate, the young striker, took the bold step of leaving his home state to trial with Adelaide City Force.

Filewood enjoyed virtual year round football when in Brisbane, playing in the summer for QAS in the National Youth League and getting his winter kicks with XXXX Premier League club Wynnum.

A successful trial period with Adelaide City resulted in him signing a contract with the Force and he now is patiently serving his apprenticeship playing for the City Premier League team under coach, Neville Flounders.

Neville Flounders: Adelaide coach and Owen's mentor.

Filewood broke through the scoring ranks in the second round of the winter season cracking home a hat-trick in City's 5-0 win over Port Lion Pirates.

The Filewood household has a strong rugby league influence with Owen's father a former player, but Owen and his four brothers prefer the genuine World game of soccer football.

While the boys and their sister are justifiably proud of their father and his sporting achievements, it is the hand that rocked the cradle that degreed soccer should be the major pursuit of the Filewood male clan.

"When we were kids, mum simply decided that we boys should not play rugby because its too rough, but she was happy about us playing soccer," Owen said.

Small in stature, but big in heart, Filewood trains with City's NSL squad for all sessions except Friday nights when he gathers with his Premier League team mates.

The NSL sessions are under legendary boss Zoran Matic and SA soccer icon, Serg Melta.

The latter rated Filewood highly, giving the forward a glowing endorsement. "Owen has a high motivational level and he has a great appetite to go further in the game," Melta said.

"He paid his way over here to be part of the squad and he's prepared to do what it takes to make the grade."

Melta paid Filewood the ultimate complement by comparing him to the former City and Glasgow Celtic championship striker Dixie Deans.

"Owen is only a little guy, but his timing is great with his leaping for headers. He reminds me of Dixie with his aerial ability.

"He's tenacious, courageous, lion-hearted and he's a tremendous character with a fine team spirit," said Melta.

BARRY'S HIGH FIVE

Barry Coombs hit a career high when he netted five goals for Cumberland Foxes against the Panthers in a 6-1 State League second round romp.

The previous best scoring feat achieved by 20-year old Coombs was a hat-trick for the Foxes Under 19 team two years ago.

Highlight of the five-goal haul was a rapid-fire three goals in an eight-minute burst of net busting magic.

Socceroos' striker, John Aloisi (right) in action against Tonga during the just-ended Oceania World Cup qualifiers in Coffs Harbour.

It was a case of seizing the moment for affable Coombs, whose performances in the Under 23 side had prompted coach Richard Preston to promote him to the A team.

"He's not been a regular starter in the State League side, but he's been knocking on the door," Preston said.

"Look, this is your chance, just go out there and back yourself." was the pre-match advice Preston, who is a former West Adelaide Sharks player.

The message was received and understood as Coombs ended the match with the fabulous five goals and, according to his delighted coach, could have had another three goals.

"What I liked was the good variety of goals Barry scored, with the fourth one being an absolute rip-snorter."

Coombs agreed with his mentor, rating his fourth success as the best of a memorable day's work.

"I ran onto a pass and volleyed the ball over the goalkeeper from about 30 metres — it felt great."

BROKEN RECORDS

Records are made to be broken, but some take a little longer than others.

However, the almost daily record breaking feats of the Socceroos against their Oceania minnows at Coffs Harbour are re-writing the history books almost before the ink is dry on the previous figures.

World Cup qualification records have been shattered with 22-0 one day being surpassed by 31-0 a couple of days later.

When writing for a weekly publication, it's thwart with danger to declare these fantastic double figure scorelines as records.

But, since tall stories are in vogue, let's digress by recalling the longest standing (at Press time) world club record score.

Back in 1885 Abroath thrashed Bon Accord 36-0 in a first round Scottish Cup match.

The Australian record score (we are open to challenge on this one) happened in Adelaide in 1962 when club side Austria toppled Murray Bridge 33-0 in a league game.

Major scorer in that remarkable contest was SA State team, champion striker Roman Kaufmann.

Footnote: Whilst on the subject of tall scores. The joke during the rounds after Australia humiliated Tonga 22-0, went something like the following.

A journalist phoned Tonga coach Gary Phillips with the question, "What time did you kick-off?"

Phillips replied, "Every four minutes."

GREAT TIMING

When you have famous parents the odds are yur timing would be impeccable.

Such was the case with Gabriella Mae Vidmar when she joined our world last week in Adelaide.

Mother Sarah (nee Angove) a champion netball player and daughter of SA netball coach Marg Angove, and proud Dad, Aurelio the Adelaide City Force captain, are both over the moon at the arrival of their first born.

"Viddie" was present at the birth that was timed nicely for him to fly out for national team duty at Coffs Harbour.

AMATEUR LEAGUE RESULTS

Reserves in brackets

Saturday, Div 1

Adel Uni 1-St Peters 2 (1-1); Flinders Uni 5-Comets 6 (0-5); Old Ignatians 2-Bosa 2 (4-0); Monarchs 4 Stirling 2 (0-2); Hahndorf 1 Old Boys 4 (2-1).

Saturday, Div 2

Sturt Marion 1 MA Hawks 1 (0-2); West Dist 10 Strathalbyn 3 (4-0); Croydon Gougars 2 Victor Harbor 1 (4-0).

Sunday, Div 1

Eliz Vale 6 NAB 1 (3-0); E/Side Jets 13 Eliz Grove 1 (6-0); Fulham 5 Macedonia 3 (8-0); Eliz Field 0 Salis Villa 1 (1-1); Eliz Downs 2 Salis Inter 5 (3-1).

Sunday, Div 2

P/Hills East 4 Budapest 3 (7-1); Salis Florina 6 West Beach 1 (2-1); Ingle Farm 0 The Pines 3 (0-3); USC Lion 2 P/Hills West 2 (2-4); Limnos 3 P/Field Gdns 5 (3-1).

Allan Crisp can be heard on the Marshall Thompson Homes/Pacific Real Estate 5RPH (1197am) Breakfast Soccer Show each Tuesday from 7am-8.30am, along with Croydon Kings coach Phil Scardigno, Peter Millar, The Advertiser soccer writer Meno Toutsidis and producer Rob Popplestone.

It's Take Two for the 5RPH SOS (Soccer On Sunday) program each Sunday from 8.30am-9.30am with former Australian international John Perin, Allan Crisp and Peter Millar.

South Australia Premier League Results

ROUND 2

Port Lion Pirates	0	Modbury Jets	3
		(R. Mitchell 2, Trimboli)	
Blue Eagles	8	Metro Stars	2
(Brooks 4, Sergi 3, Artone)		(Day, Schmizzi)	
Port Pirie Spirit	0	Campbelltown City	2
		(J. Barbaro, Campbell)	
Olympic FC	0	White City	0
Adelaide City	2	Croydon Kings	1
(Monie 2)		(Iandiorio)	
Playford Patriots	0	Raiders	0

STATE LEAGUE

Noarlunga Bulldogs	3	Seaford Surfers	1
(McArdle, Still, Foy)		(tog)	
Cobras	1	Salisbury Apaches	1
(Skoumbros)		(Blackwood)	
Para Hills Knights	6	Cumberland Foxes	0
(Breton 4, Mulady, Francis)			
Enfield Falcons	0	Hills Hawks	1
		(Maxwell)	
Western Strikers	1	Panthers	0
(Vinci)			
Birkalla	3	Northern Demons	0
(P. Paris 2, Dawes)			

ROUND 4

PREMIER LEAGUE

Friday, April 20

Modbury Jets v Adelaide City

Saturday, April 21

Metro Stars v Port Lion Pirates
White City Woodville v Blue Eagles
Campbelltown City v Olympic FC
Raiders v Port Pirie Spirit
Croydon Kings v Playford Patriots

STATE LEAGUE

Saturday, April 21

Salisbury Apaches v Western Strikers
Northern Demons v Cobras
Seaford Surfers v Birkalla
Hills Hawks v Noarlunga Bulldogs
Cumberland Foxes v Enfield Falcons
Panthers v Para Hills Knights

VIS U-18 IMPRESS IN MALAYSIA

By Roy Hay

The Victorian Institute of Sports U-18 team drew 1-1 with a powerful Malaysian Under18 team in the opening match of its tour penultimate Thursday.

In hot and very humid conditions, with a pitch sometimes so wet that the Australians' surfing skills came into their own, the VIS youngsters took the lead through skipper Ricky Chillico.

Brendan Beni intercepted a clearance by the Malaysian keeper, beat two players and gave Chillico a one-on-one with the goalie. Just at the end of the first half there was a melee in front of VIS keeper Fred Au and the home team took advantage to equalise.

Thereafter the VIS defence played superbly with Carl Recchia, Michael Popovski and Steve Pantelidis holding firm. The VIS rode this spell of pressure and began to catch the home team on the break but did not manage to score again.

Then on Saturday, the VIS played the national Under-16 team. This time the VIS had the physical advantage but the young Malaysians proved to be very fast and skilful and took the lead and almost doubled it inside the first fifteen minutes.

Christian Morales in goal for the VIS put up the shutters and gradually his defenders got on top when they switched from a flat back four to a sweeper system.

The VIS Head Coach Ernie Merrick fielded all the 13 and 14 year olds in this match and Ibraim Ibraimi who had been unsighted early, popped up with a rocket from distance which flew into the Malaysian net. Christian Sarkies then received the ball with his back to goal, turned his man and put the VIS ahead. Finally a five or six pass movement involving Serkan Oksuz and Brendan Beni resulted in a cross hammered home by Manny Karas.

The VIS team for this match included Christian Morales, Evan Karavitis, Steve Pantelidis, Damien Ostrowski, Ibraim Ibraimi, Christian Sarkies, Billy Celeski, Brendan Beni, Bobby Georcevski, Serkan Oksuz and Ricky Chillico.

On Monday the VIS played the Under-17 team and the tour concludes with a rematch against the Under-18s.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

Perth Glory's Nick Mrdja (right) struggles for possession with Melbourne Knights' John Vukadin.

PERTH GLORY 1
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 0

By Richard Kreider

Perth Glory have managed to hang on to the all-important second place on the NSL standings after a spirited 1-0 win over another of the top-six challengers, Melbourne Knights at Perth Oval last Saturday.

A close-range left-foot strike from Bobby Despotovski mid-way through the first half was enough to make him the outright leader on the NSL goalscorers board with 17 goals, on top of keeping Perth Glory in second position with just three rounds of the home and away games remaining.

"Because of having so many key players out, I am more pleased with this performance than many of the other games where we won 4-0 or 5-1," said Glory coach Bernd Stange.

"The Knights needed a result today to make the top-six and that is why they were a very tough opponent," said Stange.

Such was the importance of the game there was plenty of work for the medical staff although the game was never considered vicious.

"It was simply an indication of the importance the guys put on the end result," said Knights team manager John Sigur.

"We are a club that hates losing. We set ourselves a target to cement our place in the top-six and I think our players can hold the heads high today despite the result. Maybe if we had shown greater commitment in that first half and closed down a bit more, it would have been a different scoreline," said Sigur.

Glory played this crucial match without influential utility Scott Miller and champion netbuster Damian Mori who were on Socceroo duty and Alistair Edwards who suffered a neck injury at training the night before.

But their replacements Brad Maloney, Nick Mrdja and Jamie Harnwell who was returning from suspension, all performed credibly since everyone will now be pressing for finals selection.

Perth's last three opponents are lowly Brisbane Strikers (away), Parramatta (h) and Canberra Cosmos (a) while the Knights are still in with a chance to make the play-offs having assured the three points next weekend with the Carlton forfeiture followed by Marconi Stallions (a) and finally a home game versus Newcastle United.

Prior to the opening whistle, the Knights players performed an endearing PR exercise with the Glory supporters by presenting a red rose to eleven lucky randomly selected ladies from the 13,170 crowd.

But there were certainly no niceties out on the pitch where both sides displayed unlimited resolve in their endeavours for the right result.

Defenders Ljubo Milicevic of the Glory and talented Rody Vargas both sported large head bandages after challenging for a Glory corner.

Dega (Edgar) Junior, the normally quiet Brazilian midfielder was unusually animated with Knights' player/coach Andrew Marth when he strongly gestured to Marth and referee Simon Micallef that he copped an elbow just below the eye, which needed half-a-dozen stitches.

Micallef didn't see that particular incident but he still managed to hand out four yellow cards to the visitors, and three to Perth players.

Kasey Wehrman, who failed Socceroo selection for the Oceania World Cup qualifiers, performed well out of midfield with his usual forceful approach, while stopper Harnwell and Craig Deans and relative newcomer Mrdja were equally prominent.

Rody and Andy Vargas toiled hard for the Knights, along with goalkeeper Lupce Acevski, Sash Ognenovski and Toto Da Costa who came close to finding the net on a number of occasions.

Despotovski, another considered unlucky not to have gained national selection, broke through in the 24th minute when a quick and searching dropkick from goalkeeper Jason Petkovic dropped to the feet of Mrdja.

The strapping young striker displayed the composure of a veteran when he waited for Despotovski to be in the right position before delivering the ball into the forwards run and who finished off the move by drilling the ball into the roof of the net.

The Victorians was presented with a clear equalising opportunity eight minutes later when a lapse of concentration from Milicevic allowed Joel Porter a free run on Jason Petkovic's goal. But Porter watched in anguish as his hurried strike rolled across the front of the target.

Glory 'scored' again in the 74th minute when Mrdja deflected a Harnwell header into the net from right on the goal-line but Harnwell was adjuged to have fouled a Knights defender when they both contested a Wehrman corner.

Glory will now be eagerly waiting on Soccer Australia for the outcome of the postponed WollongongWolves — Eastern Pride clash.

Thankfully, the likelihood of the Wolves playing the Prides youth team has been averted, since the defending champions could have been able to inflict a cricket score and boost their goal average to above that of the Perth team.

Meanwhile, it is almost certain, Glory will be able to play their home final matches under lights at Subiaco Oval when at one stage the Subiaco Council had denied the clubs application as well as that of a Rugby international between Australia and the South African Springboks.

FOOTBALL KINGZ 2
CANBERRA COSMOS 3

Whatever hopes the Auckland-based Football Kingz have of reaching the NSL grand finals, disappeared on Friday night infront of their home fans at the Ericsson Stadium, when they fell 2-3 to visiting Canberra Cosmos.

The New Zealeand team, which had hitherto put together an impressive string of results lately in their last three games, faltered when it mattered most at home, by conceeding this crucial Round 27 game to hard-fighting Cosmos.

Looking jittery and unsettled, the Kingz committed elementary errors, particularly in the defence to allow Cosmos snatch an early two-goal lead by the 20th minute mark.

Canberra's Paul Ivanic found target in only the ninth minute of the game, when he collected a long clearance out of his own defence from hardworking Con Anthopoulos, to open up the Kingz' backline.

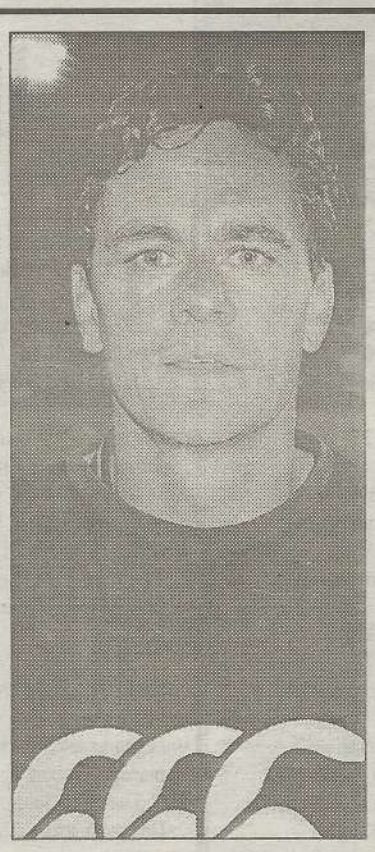
Ivanic strolled onto the long pass after the Kingz' Gerard Davis had lost the ball. He found himself face-to-face with hapless Julio Cuello, in goal for the Kingz, whom he coolly beat to register the first goal for a surprised Cosmos. The stunned crowd at a rain-swept Ericsson stadium could not believe their eyes. After a stirring and widely-acclaimed win over Parramatta Power, penultimate weekend in Sydney, the Kingz fans expected their side to seal their grand final dreams on Friday night with another good showing against struggling Cosmos. Subsequent events, as well as Cosmos' stubborn attitude, however rubbished those expectations.

Things got worse for the Kingz 11 minutes later when a seemingly harmless long-range shot from Canberra's Daniel Aliffi bounced in front of Cuello. He made a mess of getting his body behind the ball and instead fumbled it into his own net.

Afetr the double embarrasment of being two goals down, the Kingz finally sparked into life on the half hour.

Che Bunce headed over an Aaran Lines free-kick and a minute later player-coach Wynton Rufer dragged his side back into the match with a well-worked goal.

After a battling Andy Bluhm won the ball for the Kingz on the right wing, he played Jonathan Perry clear and then swung in a perfect cross for Rufer to tap-in, much to the relief of their drenched supporters.



Wyton Rufer: Could not save Kingz from home defeat.

A minute later, prolific scorer, Denis Ibrahim squandered a great chance to draw the Kingz level, scuffing his shot wide after more impressive lead-up work from Lines. After further half chances to Rufer, Ibrahim and Bunce, it was Lines who once more brought relief to a bedraggled Kingz side.

Enjoying uncharacteristic freedom on the left wing, he crossed to the far postwhere an unmarked Jonathan Perry controlled the ball, then slammed home an unstoppable shot past Canberra's newly-acquired goalkeeper Anthony Giannasca.

Turning level at halftime when they could easily have been two down, the Kingz were quick to exploit their good fortune.

On 50 minutes Rufer should have put them ahead, but great work by Giannasca kept out his header from a Perry cross and Rufer's follow-up shot.

By now the Kingz were dominating territory and possession, and required only patience against a battling Canberra side which wasn't giving up without a fight.

Another Kingz error in the 83rd minute, painfully gifted Canberra the game.

A diagonal pass was intercepted by Jon Angelucci, who played the ball nicely to Con Anthopolous, who in turn tucked the ball home at Cuello's near post.

Jon Angelucci: Helped keep the Kingz at bay.

Try as much as they could, there was no coming back this time around, as Cosmos packed their defence to ward off wave-after-wave of Kingz attack.

The Game between Eastern Pride and Wollongong Wolves was postponed indefinitely.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

SYDNEY UNITED 0
NEWCASTLE UNITED 3

Newcastle United scored an impressive 3-0 away victory against Sydney United at the Sydney United Sports Centre yesterday.

John Buonavoglia led and inspired Newcastle by scoring two goals to virtually write off any chance the home team may have had of making the top six.

John Buonavoglia: Opened scoring for Newcastle.

Newcastle besieged Sydney United's goal right from the first whistle and dominated the first half.

Buonavoglia opened the scoring in the 34th minute from the penalty spot after United defender Elvis Olic was ruled to have handled the ball from a right sided cross.

The Newcastle striker calmly stepped up to hammer the ball into the roof of the net, sending 'keeper Brett Hughes the wrong way.

After the penalty Newcastle United sustained their ceaseless onslaught on the Sydney United defence and almost grabbed a second goal in the 42nd minute.

Buonavoglia met a right wing cross inside the Sydney United penalty box and headed the ball towards the left hand corner but a reflex save from Hughes sent the ball onto the crossbar and out to safety.

Sydney United made only one change at half time, Matthew Clowes replacing Terry Palapanis. However, this didn't have the desired effect as Newcastle continued to pour on the pressure.

Newcastle added to their lead early in the second half in the 52nd minute through the head of tenacious midfielder, Peter Tsekenis.

Sydney United Coach, Velimir Kupresak, was then forced to change his battle plan replacing Francis Awaritefe with Zlatko Arambasic, and Nahuel Arrarte with Kain Rastall.

Newcastle United put the game beyond reach when Buonavoglia scored his second in the 86th minute.

Mark Wilson played a well weighted angled cross from the left side which picked out Buonavoglia on the penalty spot, who slotted the ball past the advancing Hughes.

ADELAIDE CITY FORCE 2
BRISBANE STRIKERS 2

By Allan Crisp

Brisbane Strikers struck Adelaide City Force off the NSL finals list with a stunning second half revival that transformed a two-goal deficit into an heroic 2-2 draw.

The Force nodded into a half time comfort zone after two fine headed goals from Claudio Pelosi and Louis Brain deservedly put it into a seemingly unassailable position.

Those goals were thumped home in an incredible two minute burst as experienced Pelosi capitalised on an excellent right wing cross from Gianluca Lagati before youngsters Lucas Pantelis and Brain combined for the second success of Cityís Easter Sunday.

However, John Kosmina's Strikers refused to wave the white flag by turning adversity into triumph after their goalkeeper Daniel Duke was unable to continue in the second half after twisting a knee in the first half.

Peter Dwyer became the makeshift goalkeeping hero for Brisbane, keeping a clean second half sheet with an unorthodox display of glovemanship.

Kosmina explained that Dwyer was, "really not a bad keeper," but that he had last filled that position back in Scotland.

Jeromy Harris fired the Strikers comeback with a brilliant 64th minute header and salvaged a point for the visitors by converting a penalty after Pantelis was punished for handling in the box, an offence that referee Gerry Connolly did not believe warrented a booking.

City coach Zoran Matic rated the penalty as "soft" declaring that Connolly had previously awarded spot-kicks against his team when it played Wollongong, Carlton and Perth Glory.

"Perhaps we are just unlucky," said Matic, who said Adelaide is now, "In a nasty position, because the Melbourne Knights have a bye next round, while we go to Parramatta."

"I donít believe in miracles, but this is the toughest job (to make the finals) than ever before."

Former Australian captain Kosmina was justifiably proud of his players. "Through suspensions and injury we were forced to make five changes from last week," he said.

"We defended better in the second half, but they didnít put us under any pressure."

This sorry second stanza collapse from City meant it had failed to score a home win in its last seven outings at Hindmarsh Stadium.

But Adelaide's biggest crime was in not testing stand-in goalkeeper Dwyer, who did not have a single genuine shot on target to save.

"We had no supply to our front men in the second half and I had no player with a right foot when it was needed," Matic lamented.

Claudio Pelosi (right) scored one of Adelaide City's goals.

Brisbane's first half goalkeeper Duke was under pressure from the kick-off and was penalised in the16th minute for dwelling on the ball for over the allotted six seconds, but the resultant free kick from inside the box was belted over the crossbar by Ante Kovacevic.

And with Lagati prominent on the right with his crosses and with David Terminello relishing in his starting role as replacement for the suspended Brad Hassell, City hoisted the one-way traffic sign.

Attitudes changed dramatically in the final half as Chay Hews, Harris and captain Stuart McLaren took command in swinging the balance of power to the Queenslanders.

NORTHERN SPIRIT 0
PARRAMATTA POWER 0

Northern Spirit midfielder, Robert Enes (right) initiates an attack towards Parramatta's area.

By Paul Goodwin

Northern Spirit escaped with a point, in turn earning their first in seven games at North Sydney Oval, when they hung on for grim death to keep Parramatta Power at bay and ensure that their opponents left with nothing better than a 0-0 draw.

That it was also the first point they have ever collected against their western-suburbs neighbours would have been scant consolation for Spirit; but at least the home side emerged with some credit, as Power was well on top for long periods and only poor finishing and alert keeping by Spirit custodian Paul Henderson denied them the win.

Spirit's cause was not helped by the dismissal of Scott Thomas, less than an hour into the game, for a second caution, after a bad foul when a Spirit attack had broken down.

It was to become even more of a backs-to-the-wall effort after that with Northern Spirit restricted to a few swift breakaways as they soaked up enormous pressure from a Parramatta side which seemed to have the ball an inordinately long time throughout the game.

That they managed to get into the penalty area or its vicinity almost continually during the game without hitting the target, was down not only to Henderson and some desperate defending by Michael Cunico, Noel Spencer and Matt Bingley in particular, but also to woeful finishing.

Power sent over 60 crosses, the majority from the industrious and canny left winger Damien Brown, but only thirteen of those found their way to his over-anxious team mates as Spirit was able to clear, or partially clear, on countless occasions.

The one time Spirit keeper Henderson looked beaten, a shot from substitute Brendan Santalab crashed against the crossbar and was gratefully lifted to safety.

Nick Orlic had given Spirit's Joey newcomer Mathew Hunter the slip and laid the ball in the path of Santalab who then chested it down and hit the ball on the rise, with the goal gaping.

Parramatta had made most of the early running too, with Henderson needing to bring off a brilliant one-handed save to deny Matt Thompson in the 19th when Orlic and Ahmad Elrich had combined to set the youngster up with a low cross from the right.

Spirit's best chance came two minutes later when Ben Burgess struck a free kick firmly, from 25 yards out, after Tony Perinich, who was making his first start of the season, had been brought down by Milan Blagojevic. Young Power keeper, Liam Reddy, managed to push the well-directed shot around the post.

Miller was always in the thick of the action for Parramatta, but his touch let him down a number of times, none more crucially than in the 67th when facing Henderson and failing to control a ball played to his feet inside the area.

It summed up Miller's and Parramatta's day.

On a positive note both clubs gave outings off the bench for their Joeys players, Parramatta's Michael Brown and Spirit's Matthew Hunter, both joining the fray for the last 15 minutes and showing up nicely.

Parramatta Power young striker Luke Roodenburg (right) manages to hold off a Northern Spirit defender.

Olympic Clashes With Souths Tomorrow Night.

By John Economos

Sydney Olympic tomorrow night, (Wednesday), clashes with League leaders South Melbourne in a most crucial battle which ultimately could decide the Minor Championship.

Olympic soundly beaten 3-1 by the Wollonogong Wolves two weeks ago, will be hungry to get back on the winning trail tomorrow night but their task will be far from an easy one.

The Sydney team is expected to be bolstered by the return from national duty of their outstanding goalkeeper, Clint Bolton plus mobile right wingback, Lindsay Wilson.

Olympic's real strength lies in its pacey and enterprising midfield with playmaker Troy Halpin calling the shots with his excellent vision and long ball distribution.

Souths' power lies mainly in its magnificently solid and highly experienced backline, superbly marshalled by central defender and former Australian World Cup marker, Mehmet Durakovic.

Mickey Petersen's Souths, already has shown they can travel successfully for big games.

Mehmet Durakovic: Souths' magnificent central defender.

Ante Juric: Olympic's skipper and sweeper.

Souths proved this recently with their win over Wollongong at WIN Stadium in Round 24.

Olympic's skipper and lanky sweeper, Ante Juric, stated to ABSW: "We will be looking very much forward to the challenge.

"It's a challenge against a team I regard as arguably the very best in the NSL on their day.

"It's vital to win if we are aiming to grab a top two spot on the League.

"Souths are very tough to break down, and probably there will only be one goal in it.

" But we're confident and hopefully we can produce one and keep it tight ourselves, "Juric ended.

South Melbourne's mercurial captain and intelligent playmaker, Paul Trimboli, stated to ABSW last night: " This match is critical for us.

"We will be flying up to Sydney on Wednesday morning for this Big Match.

"Last year when we came back from the World Club Championships in Brazil, it was Olympic that beat us by 6-0.

"So we have a lot to avenge and make amends for.

"Also we will be trying to stitch up the Minor League Championship as quickly as possible by gaining the six League points we still need ," calculated South's captain and qualified Accountant.

Meanwhile Souths' boss, Mickey Petersen, himself a former Australian international, told ABSW: " Understandably we still have to consolidate our spot in the Top Two.

"There are still 12 League points up for grabs so anything is likely to happen. "We will be trying a few things because we might meet Olympic later in the finals.

"A lot will depend on how the boys coming back from the Australian squad, (M. Petkovic, Colosimo, De Amicis and Boutsianis), have pulled up after last night's-(Monday) -match against Samoa.

Paul Trimboli: Souths' skipper and elegant playmaker.

"This will be a good test for South Melbourne Football Club to see where we are at, and where Sydney Oympic is at.

"These (South Melbourne vs Sydney Olympic), games always seem to provoke a bit more from our supporters. It's a bit like an old derby, "Petersen summed up.

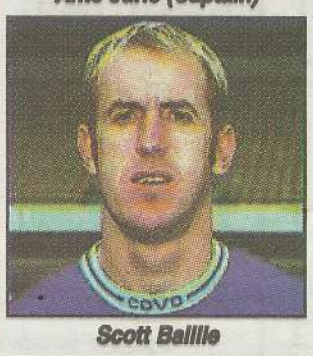
Sydney Olympic vs South Melbourne

BELMORE SPORTS GROUND

Wednesday Night, 18th April

Kick-Off Main Game 7.30pm • Youth League
Sydney Olympic v Marconi Colts Kick-Off 5.00pm

Ante Juric (Captain)



Scott Baillie

Troy Halpin

Lindsay Wilson

Kresimir Marusic

Pablo Cardozo

Winner of this match will be presented with

The Bank of Cyprus Cup

★

See the Stars

★

Under the Stars

★

Match Day Sponsor

The Bank Of Cyprus

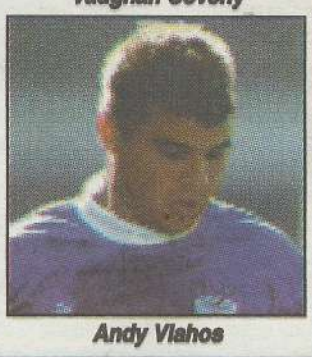
Paul Trimboli (Captain)

Memhet Durakovic

Steve Panopoulos

Patrick Klsnorbo

Vaughan Coveny



Andy Vlahos

Sydney Olympic sponsored by DAINTREE RESTAURANT

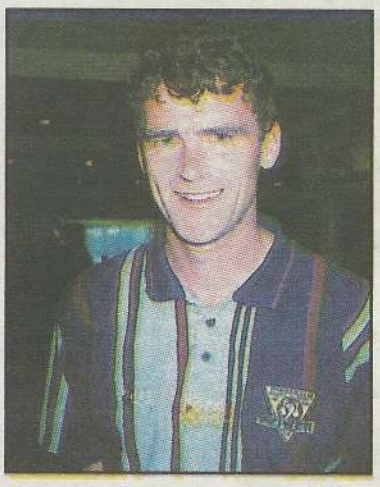
Parramatta Power to Clash with Adelaide City

By John Economos

The Parramatta Power on Saturday night will play its very last game at home for the season when it locks horns with Zoran Matic's desperate Adelaide City at the Parramatta Stadium.

The Power which earlier in the season showed excellent form that yielded solid results and had threatened to be one side that would give the League Championship a serious shake, has over the past two months consistently fallen away to bring unsatisfactory results.

The two year old Club this season, has averaged winning just one game in every three, results far from being anywhere good enough for a team to even consider a spot in the ' Top Six Series'.



Alex Tobin: Parramatta captain.

David Mitchell: The Power's Coach.

Head coach David Mitchell, stated to ABSW last night: "We have already accepted that this season in reality is over for us and we are seriously looking towards rebuilding for next season.

"Last Friday night I used no less than five teenagers in our match against the Northern Spirit, and these young guys did really well.

"But I will not be overloading the team with too many youngsters from now on.

"We still have our goalkeeper Les Pogliacomi out with an injured shoulder whilst midfielder Walter Ardone could now be out for the rest of the season with chipped bones in his foot," lamented Mitchell .

Mobile striker Joel Griffiths is still out of action after suffering a hip injury very early in the game against Sydney Olympic three weeks ago.

It's almost certain that Mitchell will retain as his first team goalie, 19 year old Liam Reddy, (son of former Australian Rugby League international, Rod).

Meanwhile the Power's industrious midfielder Peter Bennett is still out, having to serve another week of his suspension.

Mitchell went on to warn: "I know how tough Zoran Matic is, and how almost always over the years he has managed to qualify for the 'Top Six'.

"Because of last Sunday's 2-2 draw against Brisbane, Matic will be hungrier than ever for maximum points from his trip to Sydney.

"He will be pursuing, (the 'Top Six'), it till the very last game. Right down to the wire," summed up Mitchell.

When contacted last night, a worried Matic told ABSW: "Look, we should have easily won the Brisbane game.

"Instead of leading 2-0 at halftime, we should have led by four or five.

"Then in the second half we allowed them to score twice.

"For Saturday night's match against Parramatta, we'll still be without Bradley Hassell who has another week to serve of his suspension.

"What we are doing now is waiting for a big moment to come from other results to work in our favour.

Zoran Matic: Adelaide City's Coach.

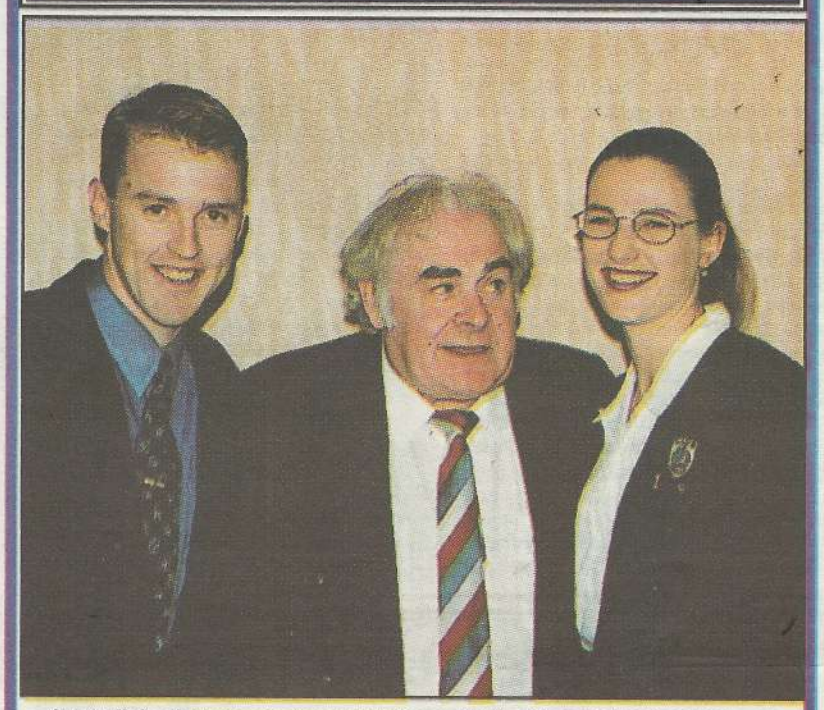
"In reality it means that I am no longer in control of our destiny.

"I have nothing that I can really say. I should just shut my mouth," snapped an unhappy Matic.

It's expected that Adelaide City's captain and midfielder, Aurelio Vidmar, will be rushed back into the team.

The Adelaide City playmaker has missed the last two games for Adelaide whilst on duty in Coffs Harbour with the Australian World Cup squad.

Brian Doyle At Club Marconi



Australia's clever connoisseur of comedy, Mr Brian Doyle, (centre), was special guest entertainer last Wednesday at Club Marconi's Sponsors' Luncheon. The ace comedian is seen here flanked by Marconi's left wingback Brendan Renaud and the Club's vivacious Soccer Secretary, Ms Gabriella Genovese.

Victorian Premier League

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SAINTS SNATCH DRAW

By David Davutovic

A dramatic 97th minute equaliser by St Albans substitute Zoran Tudor saw the 10-men Saints snatch a 2-2 draw and a vital away point against Bulleen in the deferred Round 2 clash last Thursday night.

The spiteful match got off to a blazing start with Mijo Trupkovic swinging in a free kick from the right, after Slavko Rados was fouled, and Con Sianidis was on hand to head the ball home with the aid of a skidding surface in the opening minute.

The Saints' joy was short lived as veteran striker Warren Spink pegged back an equaliser only a minute later, finishing sharply in the area after a cross from the right flank.

The turning point in the match came after only eleven minutes, when defender Martin Raspudic lost possession in the middle of the park to a Bulleen opponent. Goran Mrak chased hard and brought down a Bulleen player on the edge of the area and was given his marching orders.

The send off forced a defensive reshuffle that put the Saints on the back foot, with youngster Tom Milardovic brought back to sweeper.

Bulleen got a vital goal on the stroke of half-time as Brian MacNicol crossed from the left. The ball took a slight deflection before finding Spink yet again, who headed in on the back post with a typically predatory finish.

The second half was a dour affair in the early stages. Substitute Ryan Ollerton had a chance to finish the game in the 78th minute when he approached the St Albans goal with only the keeper to beat, but his shot was tipped away by Marijan Vunderl.

The pendulum swung St Albans' way in the 88th minute when young Zebras defender Nathan Thomas was sent off for a behind the play incident involving Maks Cuze, brother of suspended defender Joe Cuze.

Bulleen winger Jimmy Latinopoulos had a chance to bury the match in the 95th minute when he twisted and turned in the area and shot, but Vunderl was again on guard, tipping the ball over the bar.

Just as the fans were anticipating the final whistle, the Saints mounted another attack that saw Trupkovic centre the ball to Ivica Klarica whose ambitious 30-metre effort was fumbled by Michael Theoklitos, and Tudor was on hand to tuck the ball under the keeper from a tight angle.

The 97th minute goal sent the Saints fans into a frenzy, whilst the Zebras faithful were furious at the referee's decision to play that amount of stoppage time.

The final whistle also saw a number of heated altercations between the two sides on the pitch, which will only add to the tension in the return fixture on May 6 at Melbourne Knights Stadium.

VIC PREMIER LEAGUE LADDER
(AFTER ROUND 10)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bentleigh Greens	10	6	2	2	19	7	20
St. Albans Saints	9	6	1	2	15	8	19
Port Melbourne Sharks	9	6	0	3	22	13	18
Heidelberg United	9	5	1	3	10	6	16
Altona East Phoenix	10	5	1	4	14	15	16
Fawkner Blues	10	3	5	2	12	10	14
Green Gully Cavaliers	9	4	2	3	14	13	14
Preston Lions	10	3	2	5	8	13	11
Bulleen Zebras	9	2	4	3	8	8	10
Altona Magic	9	2	4	3	10	11	10
Dandenong Thunder	10	1	4	5	9	21	7
Essendon Royals	10	0	2	8	8	24	2

Victorian Premier League

ROUND 11

SATURDAY, 21ST APRIL
South Dandenong vs Heidelberg Utd — George Andrew Reserve
U21: 1.00pm • First Grade: 3.00pm

SUNDAY, 22TH APRIL
Fawkner Blues vs Altona East Phoenix — C.B. Smith Reserve
U21: 1.00pm • First Grade: 3.00pm

Altona Magic vs Essendon — Paisley Reserve
U21: 1.00pm • First Grade: 3.00pm

Green Gully Cavaliers vs Preston Lions — Green Gully Reserve
U21: 4.00pm • First Grade: 6.00pm

MONDAY, 23RD APRIL
Bulleen Zebras vs Bentleigh Greens — Veneto Club
U21: 6.15pm • First Grade: 8.15pm

For more information, log onto
www.soccervictoria.org.au

Soccer reigns at MCG

By Bert van Bedaf

For the second time in as many years, the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Melbourne's hallowed turf for Australian Rules Football and cricket, was overrun by hundreds of youngsters eager to taste the magic of the world-code and get a run in one of the world's most magnificent stadiums.

They turned up with their mums and dads and lapped up the atmosphere.

For a day in a year, soccer ruled at the MCG, ok.

Melbourne Knights youth trainer Luciano Trani was putting a dozen seven-year-old kids through their paces with the kind of skill and enthusiasm that made him a successful player with the Albion Rovers and Fawkner in the Victorian Premier League a few years ago.

"We're teaching them some basic skills, running with the ball, some general practice, twisting and turning at both sides of the body. We're giving them a good feel of the ball so that they get control of it and feel comfortable on the ball. It's the start of learning the basic skills of the game," Trani said.

It's how Mark Viduka and Harry Kewell began, just running with the ball.

Now they're starring with Leeds United in the English Premier League and they're Socceroos.

It's the dream that fuels the desire of the youngsters running their hearts out at the MCG on this Tuesday morning. One day they want to wear the green and gold. Some of them already do so and with obvious pride.

In the centre of the big ground, where Aussie Rules get physical, where cricket sets the crowd alight and where Australia's senior and Olympic soccer teams experienced some of their most dramatic moments, Victorian Soccer Federation chief executive Geoff Miles surveys the scene.

"Last year we had about 600 children at the soccer super clinic here at the MCG. This year it's 800, boys and girls. We have a lot of young girls here. It's a great turn-out," Miles said.

"There's a huge interest in soccer at school and junior club levels.

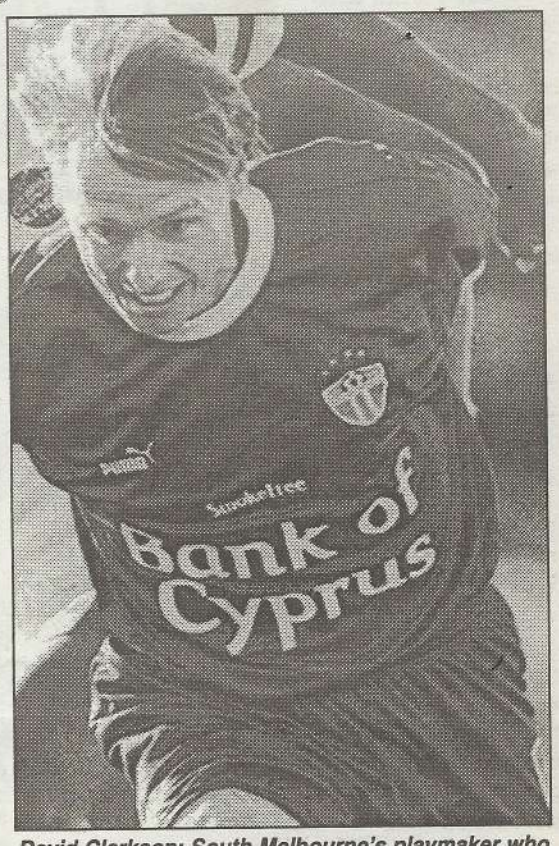
This is reflected in the record growth of the VSF's Goalkick program.

"Last year the clinic resulted in a tremendous increase in junior registrations at school and club levels. We expect something similar to happen this year," he said.

Victoria's women soccer squad, Victoria Vision, is also at the MCG and putting groups of youngsters through their exercises. It is proof of the popularity of soccer among girls, who've flocked to the MCG for the morning.

"This is fantastic," VSF chairman Manny Galanos said as he walked on to the field. "There are a lot more kids than last year. It shows the demand and that we're doing the right thing at the grass-root level."

Melbourne Knights' Andy Vargas.



David Clarkson: South Melbourne's playmaker who took part in the VSF Goalkick clinic.

Chris Taylor, coach of VPL club Altona East, took a short break from the youngsters. "This is great for kids. Quite a few of them are getting an introduction to soccer and a buzz out of being at the MCG," Taylor said.

"You don't get a turn-out like this, 800 kids, for footy (in fact an Aussie Rules clinic at the MCG two days later attracted 400 youngsters, half the number that came to the soccer event). What we need to do is harness that junior enthusiasm at senior level," he said.

Whereas David Clarkson appeared the only player to have turned up from South Melbourne, the Knights players showed in numbers. Angolan striker Toto Da Costa, brothers Andy and Rody Vargas, former Ghanaian youth international Ransford Banini and former Olyroo Dragi Nastevski were kept busy.

"The clinic is a great idea. It's fantastic for the kids and although this is the home of footy (Australian Rules), we've shown we can also make it into a soccer venue. The public will come and watch the game at the MCG when there's quality soccer (Australian against Iran in 1997 and Olympic Games last year)," Nastevski said.

Fingers crossed, hopefully Australia will play the fifth-best South-American nation for 2002 World Cup qualification at the MCG in November.

At the end of the session, Jonathan Skourletos took one more look at the enormous ground before returning home to Balwyn with his mother, Rosemary.

"Yeah, I had a great time," the seven-year-old youngster said.

"We prefer Jonathan to play soccer rather than (Aussie Rules) football," Rosemary said. "Soccer is a safer sport. That's the reason. It's a gentlemen's sport," she said.

• RESULTS •
Round 10

Green Gully v Cavaliers v Port Melbourne Sharks *(Postponed)*

Preston Lions 1
(Bosevski M)
Dandenong Thunder 2
(Ovcin B, Korcarevski V)
Essendon Royals 1
(Spence R)
Fawkner Blues 4
(Emmanuele S (2), Matkovic H, Tsiorlas M)
Altona East Phoenix 0
Bulleen Zebras 0
Bentleigh Greens 2
(Lewis C, Markovski S)
St Albans Saints 1
(Rados S)
Heidelberg United 2
Altona Magic 1

● Action was suspended in the Victorian Premier League last weekend due to the Easter celebrations. VPL action however resumes with renewed excitement this week.
Stay tuned to this page next week for all regular results, fixtures, tables and goalscorers.

QUEENSLAND SOCCER FEDERATION

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Phone: (07) 3252 5327 ● Fax: (07) 3252 1137 ● www.qldsoccer.com.au

PREMIER LEAGUE WRAP-UPS By Glenn Davis

Brisbane City extended their lead at the top of the Queensland Premier League table to five points after a comfortable 3-0 win over league strugglers Pine Rivers at Spencer Park on Saturday night.

Former Ipswich Knights midfielder Andrew King picked up his first double for Brisbane City with a goal in each half along with a header from Nathan Carlos to keep Pine Rivers winless in the league.

King gave Brisbane City a 1-0 lead after 15 minutes finishing off a movement involving Scott Elliott and Carlos at the near past which the homeside kept until the break.

Carlos played a one-two on the edge of the area to break the tight Pine Rivers defence for Brisbane City's second in the 65th minute while King's double came from a header off a corner with 20 minutes remaining.

"It was an uninspiring match but Pine Rivers worked hard and got players behind the ball which made things a little difficult," said coach Danny Wright.

Overall Wright was disappointed with the way his team played and is hoping complacency doesn't set in.

"We won well enough but I was a little disappointed," Wright said.

"We set a standard when he beat the Gold Coast a few weeks ago but we seem to be playing within ourselves and not living up to what we can do.

"There's only 22 rounds this year and it's important we keep winning to keep the pressure on teams like Wynnum and Brisbane Lions who are just behind us."

Brisbane City's lead at the top of the table was increased after nearest rivals Wynnum and Brisbane Lions drew 2-2 at Lions Stadium on Sunday.

Lions had to come from a goal down and with ten men in the last 20 minutes to earn their point over second placed Wynnum.

Lions led 1-0 at the break before a second half double from striker Scott Rocker put the visitors ahead.

Lions midfielder Danny Britton scored in the first half to give his side a 1-0 halftime lead but went from hero to villain when he was sent off following a second bookable offence midway through the second half.

Despite trailing and being down a man Lions staged a remarkable fightback to equalise through Des Hughes and even had several chances to win the game late.

"We were cruising when we led 2-1 but for some reason we fell part when they lost a player," lamented Wynnum coach Peter Tokesi.

A controversia goal from former State striker Darren Bender enabled Rochedale Rovers to snatch a thrilling 3-3 draw in injury time with premier league improvers Easts at Heath Park on Saturday night.

Easts coach Frank Byrne looked like walking away with his third win of the season until Bender drove home the equaliser against a chorus of protests from the Easts bench.

Byrne, in his first seaso coaching a pre... league club, was adamant Rochedale was handed a gift point with the late goal.

"From where I was sitting I thought it was definitely offside," Byrne said.

The goal was enough to keep Rochedale in fourth place after nearest rivals Bundaberg and Ipswich drew 1-1.

Easts have been slow starters in their first season back in the premier league with many tipping them to be instant relegation candidates along with the winless Pine Rivers.

However, Byrne can see improvement each week as the Tigers adapt to the faster pace of premier league.

"It's taken some time but we're improving every game and slowly are matching it with other teams," he said.

Easts trailed 1-0 early before a Marc Flemington penalty put them on level terms just before the break.

Striker Mitch Cattermole then put Easts ahead 2-1 in the 65th minute before Rochedale hit back to level.

Easts substitute Shane Coffey drilled a shot into the top corner from 18 metres to give the home side a 3-2 lead with ten minutes remaining which the Tigers held until Bender's controversial equaliser.

Ipswich Knights coach Frank Pimblett was happy enough to leave Across The Waves Complex with a point after a torrid 1-1 draw with Bundaberg.

Ipswich, who caused the biggest upset of the season last round with 4-2 hiding over Brisbane Lions, had to rely on a deflected goal from susbtitute Wayne Adams to come home with a point.

"It was a game of two halves with them dominating in the first half and us in second," Pimblett said.

"They're a good side especially at home and I'm very happy to come away with a point although it could have been more.A lot teams are going to come here and not get a point."

Pimblett believed Ipswich were denied a certain penalty late in the game when Trent Griffiths was brought down in the box.

"It was a dead set penalty and I still don't know how the referee didn't award it," he said.

Pimblett half expected his team's slow start.

"Our lads make the three hour-plus drive to Bundaberg themselves and traditionally we never do well here," he said.

"In the three years I've been coaching at the club we've never won in Bundaberg. For that reason and following on from our win over Brisbane Lions it was always going to be a danger game. The boys didn' break a sweat in the first half but I gave them a rocket at the break and they played a lot better after it."

Taringa Rovers picked up a crucial three pointer with a goal in each half to down Mt Gravatt 2-1 at Dittmer Park.

Taringa were on the backfoot in the early stages before giant defender Dean Guyatt broke the deadlock heading home a corner unmarked midway through the first half.

The visitors had to wait a similar period after the interval before Steve Dawes extended their lead to a comfortable 2-0 while Mt Gravatt's only reply came at the death from a header by midfielder Matt Fairley.

Prior to the game both sides had won only one match this season with Taringa going into the clash with a one point buffer over Mt. Gravatt.

Mt Gravatt's recent form slump has been a major worry for coach Mal Bland but the Taringa clash has given him some encouragment for the future.

"It was a very close game but I thought we did enough to put them away in the first 20 minutes," Bland said.

"They defended nearly all the first half and the only time they came forward they scored when Guyatt was left unmarked.

"Had we taken our chances early on when they were in trouble we could have come away with a result."

Some recent poor performances had forced Bland into experimenting with his attacking formation and his latest tactics almost paid off.

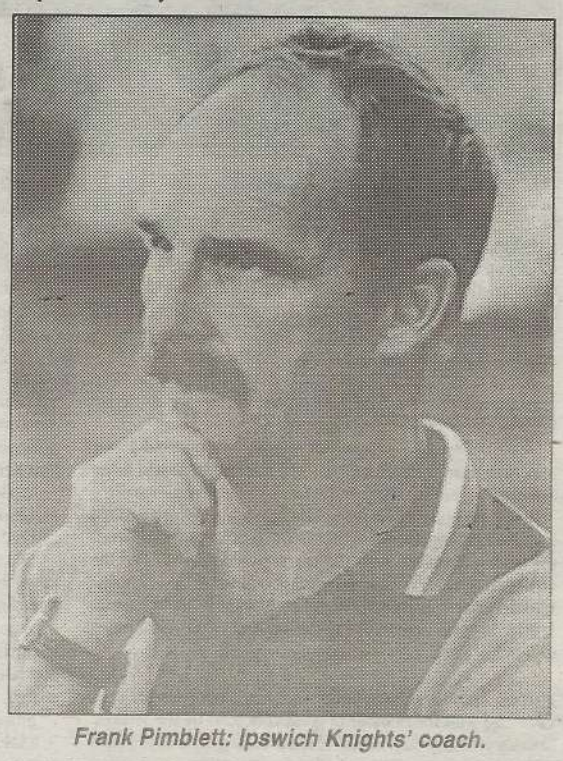
"I've been experimenting with a few things and this performance was our best for some weeks," he said.

"I'm not happy with the result but I'm not despondent with how we played and we'll keep plugging away.

Mt. Gravatt's loss keep the Hawks second last on the table, two points clear of last placed Pine Rivers.

In the only other game, Toowoomba upset the Gold Coast 1-0 with the gamebreaker coming in the final minute.

Wayne Adams: Came off the bench to score against Bundaberg for Ipswich.



Frank Pimblett: Ipswich Knights' coach.

Scott Rocker: His two goals enabled Wynnum to draw against Brisbane Lions.

QUEENSLAND PREMIER LEAGUE

FIXTURES ROUND 8

Saturday 21st April	
Gold Coast v Mt Gravatt	7.00pm
Wynnum v B'berg Waves	7.00pm
Rochedale Rovers v Brisbane City	7.00pm
Pine Rivers v Brisbane Lions	7.00pm
Sunday 22nd April	
IPSW Knights v TBA Raiders	2.45pm
Taringa Rovers v Eastern Subs	2.45pm

NSW Youth League Results

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE

GRADE 13: Manly Warringah Dolphins 2 Parramatta Eagles 0, Macarthur Rams 2 Marconi Stallions 4, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 0 Northern Spirit 7, Wollongong Wolves 1 Sutherland Shire 0, Blacktown City Demons 4 Bankstown City Cubs 1, Fairfield Bulls 0 St George 0, Central Coast Coasties 2 Sydney United 2, Penrith Panthers 0 Canterbury Marrickville 1, Sydney Olympic 7 Newcastle United 0, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0 Leichhardt Tigers 4.

GRADE 14: Manly Warringah Dolphins 0 Parramatta Eagles 3, Macarthur Rams 0 Marconi Stallions 3, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 0 Northern Spirit 8, Wollongong Wolves 2 Sutherland Shire 1, Blacktown City Demons 2 Bankstown City Cubs 0, Fairfield Bulls 0 St George 4, Central Coast Coasties 0 Sydney United 2, Penrith Panthers 3 Canterbury Marrickville 2, Sydney Olympic 4 Newcastle United 3, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 3 Leichhardt Tigers 1.

GRADE 15: Manly Warringah Dolphins 2 Parramatta Eagles 0, Macarthur Rams 0 Marconi Stallions 5, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 1 Northern Spirit 9, Wollongong Wolves 1 Sutherland Shire 1, Blacktown City Demons 6 Bankstown City Cubs 2, Fairfield Bulls 2 St George 2, Central Coast Coasties 1 Sydney United 2, Penrith Panthers 2 Canterbury Marrickville 2, Sydney Olympic 3 Newcastle United 1, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 4 Leichhardt Tigers 0.

GRADE 17: Manly Warringah Dolphins 2 Parramatta Eagles 6, Macarthur Rams 0 Marconi Stallions 2, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 1 Northern Spirit 3, Wollongong Wolves 2 Sutherland Shire 3, Blacktown City Demons 2 Bankstown City Cubs 1, Fairfield Bulls 1 St George 2, Central Coast Coasties 2 Sydney United 3, Penrith Panthers 1 Canterbury Marrickville 2, Sydney Olympic 3 Newcastle United 0, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0 Leichhardt Tigers 0.

SUPER CADET LEAGUE

GRADE 11: Blacktown City Demons 8 Bankstown City Cubs 0, Fairfield Bulls 2 St George 3, Central Coast Coasties 0 Sydney United 2, Penrith Panthers 0 Canterbury Marrickville 1, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0 Leichhart Tigers 5.

GRADE 12: Blacktown City Demons 4 Bankstown City Cubs 1, Fairfield Bulls 2 St George 1, Central Coast Coasties 1 Sydney United 2, Penrith Panthers 7 Canterbury Marrickville 0, Bonnyrigg White Eagles. 1 Leichhart Tigers 2.

Romeo Heralds Revival as Leichhardt Tigers Take Double

Leichhardt Tigers supporters again have something to cheer for with the outstanding success of the Tigers' Reserve Grade winning both the Premiership and the Championship in the inaugural NSW Soccer Federation Premier League Summer Competition.

"Scoring 51 for and conceding just 15 goals, the team's dominance of the Reserve Grade League was clearly indicated when the boys established a 10 point break wrapping up the Premiership with three rounds of the competition left to play," stated Club President Mr Raciti.

Following a minor set back in losing in the major semi-final 2-3 to the Blacktown City Demons, the team produced a strong effort to down St George 2-0 in the final, setting up a grand final showdown with long time rivals Blacktown.

On a sunny Sunday afternoon at the Marconi Stadium before a crowd of some 6,000 fans, the Tigers took the lead in the 14th minute with a great team goal finished off by star forward Andrew Falas. What ensured, was an enthralling contest of defensive and attacking play by both teams. A courageous Blacktown reduced t 10 men after an eighth minute send off, could not breach the air tight defence of the Tigers' Eleven which took the title 1-0.

Coach John Romeo was elated, not just for the win, but also for the quality Soccer played by his team.

"The team has prepared well the entire season. This is evident by the consistency of the boys throughout the competition.

"This season I have again focused heavily on player development.

John Romeo: Coach of triumphant Leichhardt Tigers.

"This is what Reserve grade is all about. The Grand Final was graduation day. The result was fantastic, and reflected the positive and significant progress all players have made this season."

The Tigers' coach has made a remarkable entry into the senior coaching ranks of the NSW Super, and now Premier Leagues. In the 2000 winter competition, John coached the Leichhardt Tigers Under 18s to the Premiership and Championship league double. Now he has repeated the feat with the double in Reserve grade.

"My approach is simple. You can never train, or prepare enough, you can never know all there is to know about our game. The potential of any player who is prepared to make the commitment and sacrifice to learn and grow and achieve great things, is limitless. If I can positively influence the behaviour of players in these terms, through my coaching, than I have created a development and learning environment which must issued."

Romeo is fast establishing a coaching reputation as a high achiever. He leaves nothing to chance. His training regimes are highly structured and monitored. Feedback to players is a constant event aimed at facilitating 'personal bests'. He exudes confidence. Some suggest there is arrogance about the man.

The Tigers' coach has a strong belief in his professional approach and is positive and passionate about his involvement with Soccer.

"Results speak for themselves," said Mr Raciti. "John provides a winning formula which this Club aspires to at all times."

WOLLONGONG NEWS

By Otto Bader

Strong Bench – for the last home game against Sydney Olympic the Wolves named for first class players as substitutes. Waiting their term were stopper David Cervinski, midfielder Max Nicholson (a former English professional), Paul Harries, a striker with years of UK lower division match experience and talented goalkeeper Daniel Beltrame.

All were professional enough to support their side even from the sideline. For Coach Ron Corry it is important to fall back on classy performers if required.

Against Olympic, striker Paul Harries and midfield player Max Nicholson were sent on with 15 minutes to go and made a valuable contribution.

It was Nicholson who provided captain Matt Horsley with a long ball, cutting out the oppositions' defenders, from which the third goal was scored. The coach would have noticed the quality pass by Nicholson, showing good overall views of play. It looks like regular midfielder Dino Mennillo would have to fear for his spot in the starting line-up with others performing well in his absence.

Sides' Aptitude Questioned – some supporters are concerned with the number of goals conceded by the Wolves. Nobody is in any way critical of the attacking style of the side, very entertaining, creating exciting Soccer action.

Some matches result in wins but several goals scored against the home side, perhaps with the players relaxing at certain phases. It is a problem for the coaching staff, trying to rectify the mental attitude of the boys at times during the match.

Coach Ron Corry believes it is lack of focus, nothing to do with the condition or physical fitness of the players. His players are aware of the requirement to improve mental toughness and it will certainly come with international matches in Spain at the World Club Championship.

The team will gather valuable experience to play against different styles of Soccer.

Olympic Coach – Branco Cullina said he did not come to Wollongong looking for a draw, rather he wanted the three points. His side played open attacking Soccer, appreciated by the nearly 8,000 strong crowd. Bad fortune for Sydney Olympic to face a Wolves team back at their best. In that form the host could have defeated any team in the league according to the Olympic mentor.

Wolves Youth Team – faced a top contender in Sydney Olympic, no scorer at half-time with all goals in the second half for a 3-1 win. For the Wolves the scoring came from youngsters Liam Austin, Steve Dimitrievski (penalty) and George Nohra. Janson Kencevski came off the bench at half time and had a hand in all three goals.

Illawarra – ICU Premier League results round 2 – reviews-previews: The surprise result was Coniston overpowering Balgownie, draws for Kemblawarra, Cringila and Port Kembla.

Wollongong Olympic v Lysaghts 2-1, two goals from striker Leon Alexiou and an own goals by the home defence, assured the points.

Olympic to clash with Coniston next, Lysaghts plays Western Suburbs. Kemblawarra v Western Suburbs 0-0, disappointed for the supporters, poor finishing by the home team in the first half and later by the visitors, saw the points shared.

Shoalhaven City v Northern United 4-3, a valuable win for the home side, both teams expected to struggle in the top league, early points a bonus. Shoalhaven to play next Picton, North plays Kemblawarra.

Port Kemba v Picton 1-1, the visitors scoring first with Matt Hawke, Port equalising late in the game through Michael Clare, coach Adrian Alston not a happy man while Picton would be satisfied to steal a point. Port plays next Bulli, Picton host Shoalhaven City.

Cringila v Bulli 2-2, perhaps expected, Yani Tupancevski and Oliver Sekulovski scoring for the host while the visitors scoring with Nick Reily and Rod Paterson, Cringila travels next to Balgownie, Bulli host Port Kembla.

Coniston v Balgownie 5-0 a huge win for the host, goals from Vald Srbinovski (2), Anthony Guido, Greg Saric and Lawrence Seberry while Baglownie missed a penalty at a vital stage of the game, their defence needs to tighten up. Coniston play next Olympic, Balgownie meet Cringila.

The points table: Coniston 6, Port Kembla 4, Olympic 4, Cringila 4, Kemblawarra 4, Shoalhaven 4, Western Suburbs 2, Bulli 1, Balgownie 1, Picton 1, North 0, Lysaghts 0.

ICU First Division – plenty of goals, some close results recorded. Barbarians v Illawarra United 1-1, scoring for the home side Robert Bojcevski (penalty), not expected result, the host was looking for a win.

Fernhill v Ruse 5-1, another win for the Hill Boys, looking good. Berkeley v Albion Park WE 1-6, the favourite of the competition in top form, a class above all other sides. Shellharbour City v Tarrawanna 0-0, a boost for the young home side, disappointment for the visitors, more though with missing two penalties.

Warilla Wanderers v Dapto 1-4, rather surprising since the home team started well, the visitors surprising all. South Coast United v Woonona 4-1, a feast of goals, close game, both trying hard. Kiama v University 1-0, a great success for the host against one of the top teams, well placed with two wins now. Bellambi v Helensburgh 1-5, a real let-down for the home team expected to do better, the visitors proving a tough opposition for everybody to play them.

Round 3 in First Division will be played on Saturday 21st April.

Cup Games – on Sunday 22/4 the next round in the Bampton Cup will be played with Youth Grade prior to First Grade – kick-off 12.30 and 2.30pm. Port Kembla v Bulli followed by Port Kembla v Coniston. Balgownie v Fernhill followed by Balgownie v Northern United.

Shellharbour City v Cringila followed by Shellharbour City v Helensburgh. Kemblawarra v Warilla Wanderers followed by Kemblawarra v Highlands. Dapto v Picton followed by Albion Park W.E. v Bulli Lysaghts v Kiama followed by Lysaghts v Fernhill. Western Suburbs v Wollongong Olympic followed by Western Suburbs v Cringila. Shoalhaven v Tarrawanna followed by Wollongong Olympic v Warrilla Wanderers.

Tarrawanna Soccer Club – are putting the disappointment of last season in Premier league behind them, looking with confidence towards a great challenge this year. Coach David Naylor has a tough task to select a competitive side from a great number of players competing for spots.

Major sponsor for the Soccer club is Balgownie Hotel, Collegians Rugby League Football Club and Fraternity Bowling Club, a variety of minor sponsors help the Soccer boys. They stage a special Sponsors Day at their oval next home game with the team keen to impress all.

Shellharbour City Soccer Club – is active off the field. After an encouraging draw against one of the competition favourites, the Soccer club is calling up supporters, friends and golf fans to enter in it's forthcoming 4-person-Ambrose Event on Sunday 29th April at Shellharbour Golf Course.

Please contact Secretary Craig Hannan phone 425 72128 or put your name down at the Golf Club. Entry fee is $30 includes breakfast, green fees, golf ball, prizes, lunch and drinks, tee-off 7.30am.

The Soccer club is looking for a Mascot – asking young boys and girls to apply to be their first grade Mascot for the season. If you are older than 4 and younger than 10 send a message to the Secretary, P.O. Box 152, Oak Flats NSW 2529, ask your Mum or Dad first for permission.

Junior Soccer – last weekend the annual Gala Day for the Juniors Soccer teams age groups U/10s to U/18s plus Girls teams was played over three days, with over 200 teams entered.

Great spectacle was observed at the finals played at Kiama Leisure Centre on four grounds. The proud winner were presented with a perpetual and individual trophy.

Referee Quiz – if a substitute player is not named prior to the start of the game, but announces himself to the referee during the half time break, will he be allowed to play? Yes? No? (Answer No).

Women Soccer Cup – the pre-season Bonnie Lassie tournament was held at Barrack Heights Sports Field with 10 teams entered. The final after an eventual day of play was played between Balgownie Babs 1 South Coast United 0.

Thank you to all players participating. The official Ladies Soccer competition kicks-off on Sunday 22 April.

Winter Super League

VALENTINE SPORTS PARK

235-257 Meurants Lane, Glenwood 2768 ● Phone (02) 9629 1800

ROUND 4

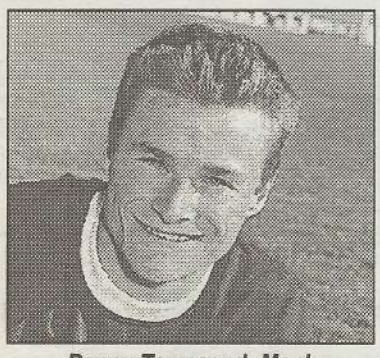
DOLPHINS TAME JETS

Manly Warringah	**2**
Fraser Park	**1**

By James Foggo

The Manly Warringah Dolphins have defeated the Fraser Park Jets 2-1 in an exciting game at Cromer Park on Saturday night.

In the first half both teams showed great energy, creating many opportunities which were unable to be finished off.



Danny Townsend: Manly Warringah Dolphin's experienced captain.

Man of the match, Dolphins sweeper Hong Yuel Ju, was creating havoc for the Jets as he dazzled his opposition with his ability to win and control the ball, whilst consistently being able to toe perfect balls to his front men creating real opportunities.

Sensation Yuel Ju confirmed his dominance in the 36th minute when he fiercely struck a ball 25 metres out from goal that was too good for Jets keeper Angelo Radic, and it thundered into the top right hand side of the net stunning all that were lucky enough to witness.

However, just when the Dolphins were looking on top, a mix up between Dolphins keeper Dean McCreath and his defence, found the keeper to be out of position when Ivo De Jesus pounced on the ball and skillfully knocked it in, in the 40th minute, much to his team's jubilation and the scrambling keeper's dismay. The goal locking up the scores at 1-1 at the break.

In the second half both teams looked hungry but could not find net.

It was not until the 60th minute when a Dolphins corner kick was unable to be cleared, and after successive shots found Jets defenders, one ricocheted off Ronald Rothenbuhler and into the net for an own goal taking the score to 2-1.

Both teams continued to create chances but were unable to convert them to goals.

Things got worse for the Jets when substitute Steven McCombe was sent off in the 86th minute leaving his team little chance of finding a goal.

But all in all, it was an exciting game where missed opportunities decided the match.

Photo by Carlos Furtado.

Just a week after playing for Blacktown City in the NSW Premier League Under-19 Grand Final, former Latvian international Vadim Mikoutski is back at Winter Super League club, Fraser Park.

Rams Overrun Lions

Macarthur Rams	**1**
Bankstown City	**0**

By David Lowndes

The Rams were keen to avenge last week's loss to Fraser Park and apart from several opening attacks by the visitors it was the home team with the first attempt on goal, minutes after a long range shot from defender David Maude.

This early part of the game spirited midfield exchanges resulting in the first caution of the game to the Rams robust striker Eric Williams.

The Rams were gaining confidence the longer the half went and were unlucky not to have at least three goals in the first 20 minutes after further strikes at goal. Frustration boiled over and in the latter part of the first half the referee had his hands full. Bankstown received their first caution on 22 minutes after a bad challenge by central defender Marcos Osorez.

On 37 minutes when, after a great charge downfield by Rams midfielder Gary Attard, he found captain Martin Bourke wide on the left, his curling shot seeing the keeper tipping the ball over the bar.

The only goal of the game came in the 57th minute, a result of a penalty after the Bankstown keeper dropped a high ball and then held back the Rams striker attempting a shot on goal. Williams calmly slotted the ball home. The game then fluctuated from one end of the field to the other until ten minutes from the finish, when realising time was not on their side, the Lions came at the Rams with one attack after the next. In extra time Bankstown blasted 2 shots just over the bar from close range and were desperately unlucky in the dying minutes when a shot hit the underside of the crossbar. Macarthur survived the onslaught to come away deserved victory 1-0.

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE LADDER

(AFTER GAMES PLAYED ON APRIL)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dulwich Hill	**3**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**9**	**4**	**9**
Manly Warringah	4	3	0	1	8	5	9
Rockdale City Suns	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
Macarthur Rams	4	2	0	2	7	6	6
Hurstville City	3	2	0	1	6	5	6
Hadjuk Wanderers	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Bankstown City	4	1	1	2	3	4	4
Fairfield Bulls	3	1	0	2	7	7	3
Fraser Park	4	1	0	3	7	9	3
Stanmore Hawks	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
MSC Liverpool	3	0	2	1	5	9	2
AC United	3	0	1	2	3	6	1

For further information see: www.soccernsw.com

Winter Super League

www.soccernsw.com.au

ROUND 5

SATURDAY 21st APRIL

Fraser Park Jets v AC United — **Fraser Park**
First Grade: 7.00pm — *U/21: 5.00pm* — *U/18: 3.00pm*

Fairfield Bulls v Macarthur Rams — **Nineveh Field**
First Grade: 7.00pm — *U/21: 5.00pm* — *U/18: 3.00pm*

SUNDAY 22ND APRIL

Bankstown City Lions vs Manly Warringah — **Jensen Park**
First Grade: 6.00pm — *U/21: 4.00pm* — *U/18: 2.00pm*

Dulwich Hill vs Rockdale City Suns — **Arlington Oval**
First Grade: 3.00pm — *U/21: 1.00pm* — *U/18: 11.00am*

Hurstville City vs Hajduk Wanderers — **St George Stadium**
First Grade: 3.00pm — *U/21: 1.00pm* — *U/18: 11.00am*

M.S.C. Liverpool vs Stanmore Hawks — **Hammondville Oval**
First Grade: 3.00pm — *U/21: 1.00pm* — *U/18: 11.00am*

Catch up with all the latest news on the Winter Super League and other NSW Soccer news on our website:

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Kanoute dreams of European adventure

West Ham United striker Frederic Kanoute says he has no plans to leave Upton Park but admits he could be tempted by an offer from a European club.

The Frenchman has been one of the London club's successes this season, although his 12 goals have not prevented them plummeting from sixth place in December to their current 15th in the English Premier League.

"We should have done better in the league but I have to say I'm quite happy with my season," Kanoute saidon the Icons website .

"Of course, I must still improve my play and my fitness but for my first real season in the premier league,it's not that bad. I'm quite pleased with myself."

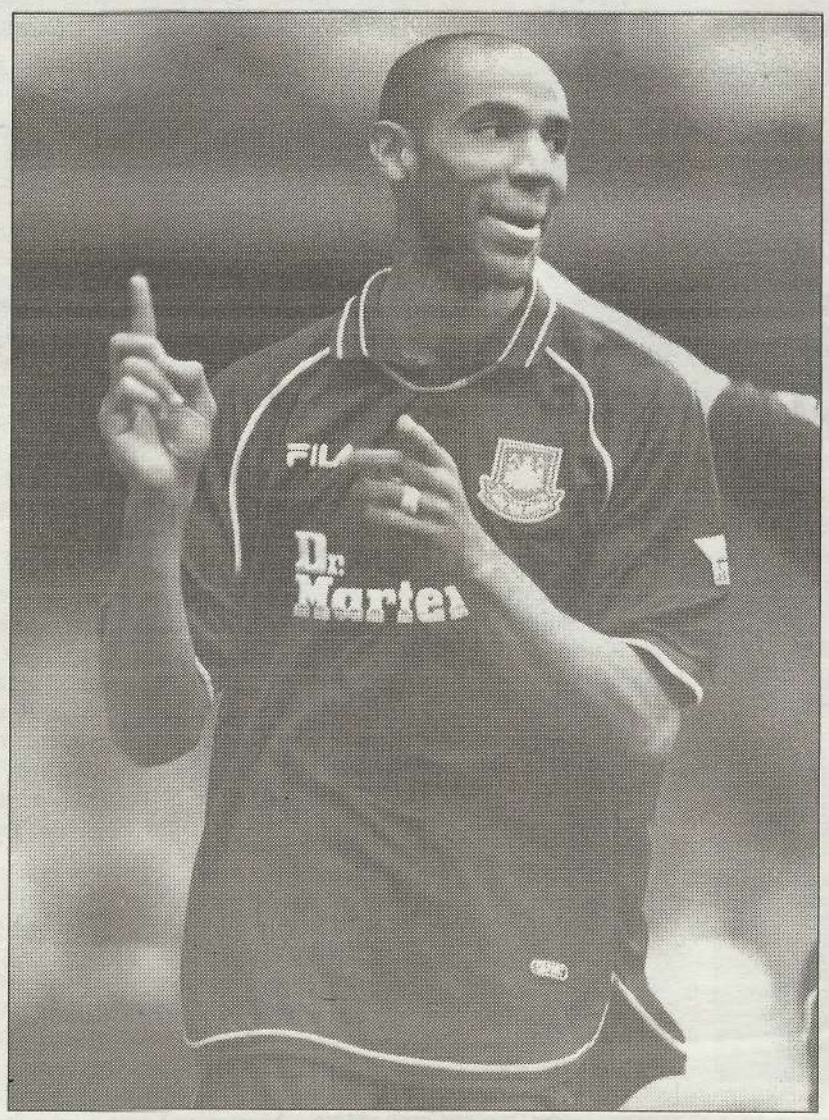
Kanoute, who joined from Olympique Lyon for 3.7 million pounds last May, said he had not been approached about a move.

"I know nothing, I'm still very happy with West Ham and I've not heard about a new club or new proposition," he said.

"We have to wait till the end of the season. It's too early, but I have to say that I will study any proposition I get.

"The only thing which could make me leave the Hammers is maybe a team playing in the UEFA Cup or Champions League or a team with tactics which will suit me.

"It's always nice to play and to train with new players. You notice what your faults and weaknesses are on such occasions. It's my philosophy to have a new experience in order to improve my faculties."



Frederic Kanoute: Hungry for a taste of continental action.

Seventh title makes Ferguson the greatest

Alex Ferguson confirmed his place as the greatest manager in the history of British football when his Manchester United team won the Premier League title for the third successive season and the seventh time in nine years.

Other clubs have matched the hat-trick — Huddersfield (1924-26), Arsenal (1933-35) and Liverpool (1982-84)— but none with the same man at the helm.

Alex Ferguson

Saturday's title, clinched with a 4-2 home win over Coventry City followed by Arsenal's surprising 3-0 home defeat by Middlesbrough, took his tally of major honours at United to 14 — surpassing former Liverpool boss Bob Paisley's 13.

Throw in his remarkable achievements at Aberdeen, where he not only broke the dominance of Glasgow pair Celtic and Rangers with a series of cups and championships but also found success in Europe, and you have a record that stands comparison with any of the great names of football management.

Ferguson celebrated his latest success in the directors box at Old Trafford on Saturday, like most other fans scarcely able to believe that Arsenal were losing 3-0 at home to relegation-threatened Boro.

"Let's hope this is a boost for us to take into Wednesday's game," he said, referring to the Champions League clash with Bayern Munich at the Olympic Stadium in which United have to score after losing the first leg1-0 at Old Trafford.

Now, with retirement beckoning at the end of next season, he wants Europe's biggest prize a secondtime.

Police subdue rioting Belgrade fans

Dozens of fans were injured in clashes with each other and riot police before an explosive Belgrade derby between Yugoslav champions Red Star and bitter rivals Partizan last week.

Rivals fans hurled bricks and bottles at each other an hour before the kick off and then fought with baseball bats and iron rods before riot police moved in to quell the violence.

Police used batons to disperse the fans, who pelted them with stones and smashed the windows of nearby shops and kiosks as they retreated to a park next to Partizan's stadium.

Local media reported that many of them were taken to hospital with severe cuts and bruises, while several were reportedly admitted with fractured limbs.

Partizan won the top of the table clash 2-1 to move level on points with league leaders Red Star, throwing the two-horse title race wide open.

NISTELROOY DOUBLE TAKE PSV INTO CUP FINAL

Ruud van Nistelrooy scored twice to give PSV Eindhoven a 3-1 win over Heerenveen.

Last week and a place in the Dutch Cup final.

His goals in the semifinal also kept PSV on course for a league and cup double, but Heerenveen were left to rue a number of missed chances.

Van Nistelrooy, whose move to English champions Manchester United last year broke down following an injury, struck two minutes before halftime with a shot from just inside the box.

Adil Ramzi made it 2-0 to the runaway league leaders on 54 minutes with a close range finish from a Dennis Rommedahl cross.

Anthony Lurling pulled a goal back eight minutes from time but van Nistelrooy struck again a minute later, latching on to long ball and slotting home under goalkeeper Hans Vonk.

PSV will face Vitesse Arnhem or Twente Enschede, who meet in the other semi on Thursday, in the final in Rotterdam.

PSV look certain to retain the Dutch championship, leading second placed Feyenoord by 10 points with seven games to go.

If they win the double, the runners-up in the Dutch Cup will play in the UEFA Cup next season.

"PSV deserved to win as they had three goals from four chances and we only one from about six," Heerenveen coach Foppe de Haan said.

SHOCK AS 43 FANS DIE IN SOUTH AFRICA

At least 43 people were crushed to death when soccer fans stampeded as they tried to force their way into Johannesburg's already-packed Ellis Park stadium to see a top league match.

It was believed to be the worst accident in South African sports history, surpassing the toll of 42 killed in a similar stampede during a match between the same Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates in 1991.

"There were more supporters than the stadium could hold. It resulted in people being crushed and injured.

There are plus, minus 50 deaths and more injured," Sports Minister Ngconde Balfour said Later, adding that he believed at least 50 had died.

Several children were among the dead and injured, many of whom were airlifted by helicopter from the pitch, which was converted into an impromptu landing pad and treatment area.

He said 120,000 had been admitted to the stadium, which has an official capacity of 70,000, before the gates were shut.

Another policeman said the crowd had become angry and rushed a high metal gate when they were told that the stadium was full.

He said the gate had given way, trapping a number of people underneath while the crowd surged in over the top.

The disaster was believed to be the worst in South African soccer history, surpassing the January 1991stampede in which 42 people died during a match in the small mining town of Orkney.

Thirteen people died in a stampede in Zimbabwe's National Stadium last July after police fired teargas into the crowd.Seven spectators died in a stampede in Zambia in 1996.

A man and a boy watch disconsolately inside Ellis Park, where 43 fans died in a soccer match.

Soccer writer Mark Gleeson said the incident could have arisen out of the practice in South Africa of selling almost all tickets at the gate without pre-booking.

"For a match like this, between teams that both stand a chance of winning the premier League championship,you can easily get 90,000 people arriving at a stadium that can take only 60,000," he said.

Batistuta overlooked in Argentine squad

Striker Gabriel Batistuta was left out of Argentina's squad for this month's World Cup qualifier away to Bolivia which was announced last week.

Argentine media speculated that AS Roma, Batistuta's Italian club, had argued that their prized striker could afford to miss the game as Argentina are almost certain to qualify for the World Cup.

Batistuta's place was taken by Real Zaragoza striker Juan Esnaider, who has made three international apperances and scored three goals.

There were no other major surprises in the squad named by coach Marcelo Bielsa.

Argentina lead the South American qualifying group by five points. The top four qualify for the World Cup and the fifth team plays off against the Oceania winners.

The match will be played at Bolivia's Hernando Siles stadium at 3,600 metres above sea level. Argentina lost 2-0 on their last visit their for a World Cup qualifier.

Goalkeepers: German Burgos (Mallorca); Pablo Cavallero (Celta).

Defenders: Roberto Ayala (Valencia), Eduardo Berizzo (Celta), Nelson Vivas (Arsenal), Walter Samuel (AS Roma)

Midfielders: Javier Zanetti (Inter Milan), Claudio Husain (Napoli), Diego Simeone (Lazio), Juan Pablo Sorin (Cruzeiro), Juan Sebastin Veron (Lazio), Pablo Aimar (Valencia), Marcelo Gallardo (Monaco)

Forwards: Juan Esnaider (Real Zaragoza), Hernan Crespo (Lazio), Claudio Lopez (Lazio), Gustavo Lopez (Celta)

English premiership nears billion pound mark

England's premiership is on course to become football's first billion pound ($1.43 billion) league, according to a consultants' report, after TV deals, merchandising and sponsorship helped generate 772.0 million pounds ($1.11 billion) in turnover last season.

But the report's authors warned spiralling wage costs had caused a pre-tax loss of 34.5 million ($49.57 million) for England's top 20 teams in the 1999/2000 season, compared to a profit of 13.7 million in the previous season.

The average annual salary of a premiership player, including squad players, was a staggering 400,000 pounds last season.

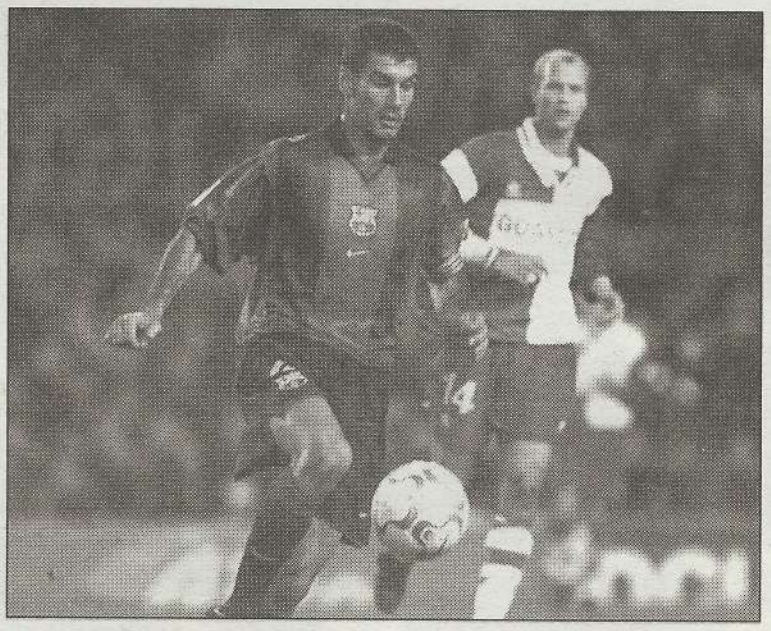
Broadcast income, soon to become the largest revenue stream, rose 24 percent to 46 million pounds.

Matchday income, which formed half of revenues in the 1995/96 season, is likely to become the smallest of the three main revenue sources after commercial income, the report said.

"At this rate, and with new television deals secured for the 2001/02 season, the FA Premier League will soon be football's first billion pound league, perhaps by May 2001," said Boon, presenting the consultancy group's review of club finances.

Clubs spent 255.5 million pounds on transfers but a new system, agreed last month between FIFA, UEFA and the European Commission, would dampen spending and smaller clubs would need to adjust their business accordingly, the report said.

Stadium improvements totalled 141 million pounds, but Boon said this should be seen as a revenue generator not a cost.



Guardiola (left): Barcelona's long-serving captain now set to leave the Catalan club.

BARCELONA RUES GUARDIOLA'S EXIT

Pep Guardiola's decision to quit the Nou Camp after 17 seasons will deprive Barcelona of the most influential Spanish player of his generation, as well as the emblem of the club's essentially Catalan character.

Luis Figo's defection from Barca to Real Madrid after five years last summer was a painful blow for the club.

His absence will still be keenly felt as the club lose one of the most successful players in their history and a guarded, intelligent figure on and off the field.

The current captain is also the last remaining link between the Barca side and the team that won what is still the club's only European Cup triumph at Wembley in 1992.

The boy from Santpedor, a small town to the north of Manresa in Catalunya, arrived at the club as a 13-year-old: a skinny, lightweight presence but blessed with obvious talent and temperament.

"I came to Barcelona without a penny and I'm leaving as a father," Guardiola said as he announced his decision to leave the club to see out his career abroad.

"I'm proud of having grown up here but on balance I want to leave to get to know a new league, another culture, new friends and new rivals."

Guardiola was groomed to run the Barcelona side shortly after joining the youth ranks of the club.

After being handed his debut by Johan Cruyff in 1990 he went on to become the metronome of the immensely talented and successful Dream Team that won the European Cup in 1992 amid four successive Spanish league titles.

He won a total of six league titles with Barcelona, as well as the European Cup Winners' Cup, two Spanish Cups, two European Super Cups and four Spanish Super Cups.

The highlight of his career was in 1992, though, when he helped Barcelona to the European Cup and then guided Spain to the gold medal in his home town Olympics.

He insists he has no idea where he will end up but he has mentioned England, Italy, Germany and France as possible destinations.

"I can say that there is no chance of me playing for another Spanish club before I retire," he insisted.

New tough rules for Euro clubs

Only clubs which can prove they are financially stable and soundly managed will be allowed to compete in fixtures organised by UEFA from the 2003-04 season, European soccer's governing body announced last week.

All European clubs will have to meet new UEFA standards during the 2002-03 season in order to be able to gain a UEFA license and take part in the Champions League and UEFA Cup and any other competitions UEFA organise in 2003-04.

The ruling comes after a two-year investigation into the way the continent's major clubs are run and a year-long study into how best to implement the scheme.

Gerhard Aigner, UEFA's chief executive said: "Our aim is to raise standards to improve the fabric of the game in Europe — this is an important step forward.

"We are delighted to be working with the eight pilot associations to begin the introduction of our new club licensing system," he added.

Clubs will prepare for the measures next year and will be expected to comply with UEFA's guidelines on infrastructure, legal issues, administration and finance by the start of the 2003/2004 season.

Possible measures could include capping a club's total salary expenditure and insisting on youth development schemes.

Last August, UEFA's deputy general secretary Markus Studer said that title-holders Real Madrid could be banned from the Champions League under the licensing plan because of the club's multi-million dollar debts.

Liverpool rests Gerrard

England midfielder Steven Gerrard is set to miss at least one of Liverpool's three matches in the next eight days.

Liverpool, still taking part in four competitions, played host to Leeds United in the Premier League last week and then visited near neighbours Everton last week.

In a schedule described by manager Gerard Houllier as "absurd", they welcome Barcelona to Anfield for the second leg of their UEFA Cup semi-final this Thursday.

"I can't see him playing Friday, Monday and then against Barcelona," said Houllier on the club's website.

Gerrard, who has a history of injury problems, played the last half hour of Liverpool's 2-1 FA Cup semi-final win over Wycombe Wanderers penuultimate Sunday and the full 90 minutes in the 1-1 draw at Ipswich Town last week Tuesday.

"Steven didn't train before the game after playing for half an hour against Wycombe," Houllier added.

Steven Gerrard

Liverpool now lie fifth in the table, three points behind Leeds United and Ipswich but with two games in hand.

AC Milan downplay Beckham interest

AC Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani has said he saw no reason why Manchester United would be willing to sell their England midfielder David Beckham.

Newspaper reports have suggested Milan could make a fresh bid for Beckham in the summer after failing with two approaches earlier this season.

Asked about the reports Galliani told Reuters: "I don't like to talk about the transfer market but we tried for Beckham last year and Manchester United said a clear 'no'.

I don't see why they would now say 'yes'".

But Galliani, who effectively runs the club on behalf of president Silvio Berlusconi, confirmed that Milan were in the market for top class players as they look to improve on a disappointing season.

He said that there were not many players who met Berlusconi's oft quoted demand for "someone who can make the difference".

"There is not a long list of such players, no more than 10 players at the most," said Galliani.

David Beckham: Sought and courted by Italian giants, AC Milan.

Barmby may miss FA Cup Final

Liverpool's international midfielder Nick Barmby could miss the FA Cup final against Arsenal on May 12 after injuring his ankle in the semi-final win against Wycombe Wanderers.

Barmby, 26, had hoped to play again next week but his ankle, which he has injured before, has been placed in a plaster cast.

Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier told the Daily Star: "He has a cast on his foot and will be out for at least three weeks. It would be premature to say his season is over and I still hope he will be available to start playing before the end of the season. But there are only five and a half weeks to the last game."

Barmby could also miss the UEFA Cup final, if they advance, as the game is only four days after the FA Cup final.

"All I can do is keep my fingers crossed," Barmby told the Daily Mail.

WORLD

RUSSO WRITES

By Joe Russo

The Fiorentina and Roma clash won by Fiorentina 3-1 was interesting in more ways than one.

Firstly it was played last Monday instead of Sunday because they feared that there would be crowd trouble. This in itself is a very sad reflection on modern day Italian football.

Secondly, it marked the return of Gabriel Batistuta to Florence, the city where he was idolised for nine years. Batistuta, now in his first year at Roma, is still scoring a plethora of goals just like he did when he played with Fiorentina.

And, thirdly, it was a game that threw a 'spanner in the works' for Roma with their lead in the Serie A being cut back due to the loss. Sweet revenge for Fiorentina fans on the club that 'stole' their idol from them.

Should Roma stumble in their quest for the title it would indeed be a real irony if it were Fiorentina who were the cause of this stumble.

□□□□

Enrico Chiesa's two goals in that game bring him right up to the top of the leading goalscorers in Italy.

In fact the Fiorentina striker is the leading Italian marksman in the Serie A.

Ahead of him are Andrej Shevchenko, Hernan Crespo and Batistuta - a Ukrainian and two Argentinians.

Chiesa is a former Italian national team player who was often selected when Arrigo Sacchi was national coach. However, in recent times he has been well and truly neglected at national level.

Alessandro Del Piero, Filippo Inzaghi, Vincenzo Montella, Christian Vieri and Marco Delvecchio are all ahead of him. It will be hard for Chiesa to edge in front of any of these guys before the next World Cup but if he keeps scoring goals, like he has been doing this year, the national boss Giovanni Trapattoni will find it even more difficult to leave him out.

□□□□

After 25 rounds, a statistic worth noting was the defensive record of Atalanta - they had conceded only 20 goals, the same number as Juventus and the least in the Serie A.

It really says something about this little team. Atalanta could well secure a place in next year's UEFA Cup. Compliments must go to their coach Giorgio Vavassori who himself is a Serie A rookie.

It is always nice to see one of these smaller 'provincial' teams doing well and attracting their own well-deserved slice of the media spotlight.

□□□□

Tomorrow night (Wednesday) sees the clash between Lazio and Parma - a vital game for both teams wishing to secure a place in the Champions League for next year.

So why is this clash being played tomorrow night? It was meant to be played on Saturday night, April 7, but after only six minutes of play, torrential rain hit Rome and the game was abandoned.

It is very rare that a professional football game is abandoned after it has already kicked off but according to all reports and footage from Rome, the downpour was enormous.

Last year torrential rain halted a game (Juventus v Perugia) but it was re-started after almost an hour and consequently Juventus lost the game and Serie A title as a result.

In Lazio v Parma, the Olympic Stadium was made unplayable and the match was abandoned. However, a curiosity and sidelight to this game has emerged.

The match could not have been played the day after (Sunday) even though the weather was much better because a rule stipulates that players cannot compete on consecutive days.

So even though they only played six minutes, the crazy rule prevented it happening on Sunday. Surely there must be more flexibility in football rules and a farce such as this can be prevented from happening again in the future.

A better rule would stipulate that if a game has been played for less than one half, it could be re-scheduled for the next day.

But back to the clash tomorrow night. Lazio should prove themselves to be the stronger team especially in front of their own home crowd. The defending champions under new coach, Dino Zoff, are in great form and have really turned around their sluggish start to the season under Sven Goran Eriksson.

ITALIAN SERIE A

Juventus defender, Paolo Montero (left) attempts to stop Inter Milan striker, Christian Vieri.

Atalanta	0	Parma	1
Bari	0	Napoli	1
Brescia	1	Verona	0
Fiorentina	2	Lecce	0
Juventus	3	Inter Milan	1
AC Milan	3	Udinese	0
Reggina	0	Lazio	2
AS Roma	2	Perugia	2
Vicenza	4	Bologna	2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. AS Roma	**26**	**18**	**5**	**3**	**50**	**23**	**59**
2. Juventus	26	16	7	3	45	21	55
3. Lazio	25	15	4	6	46	27	49
4. Parma	25	12	7	6	39	21	43
5. Atalanta Bergamo	26	10	10	6	31	21	40
6. AC Milan	26	10	10	6	41	35	40
7. Inter Milan	26	10	8	8	34	32	38
8. Fiorentina	26	8	12	6	43	35	36
9. Bologna	26	10	6	10	34	35	36
10. Udinese	26	10	2	14	39	44	32
11. Perugia	26	8	8	10	34	38	32
12. Lecce	26	7	8	11	31	42	29
13. Brescia	26	6	10	10	32	36	28
14. Vicenza	26	7	7	12	28	38	28
15. Napoli	26	6	9	11	25	36	27
16. Verona	26	6	6	14	29	46	24
17. Reggina	26	5	5	16	18	43	20
18. Bari	26	5	4	17	21	46	19

ATALANTA 0 PARMA 1

A fine strike from Savo Milosevic extended Parma's unbeaten run to eight matches.

The Yugolsav danced past two players before beating Italy under-21 goalkeeper Ivan Pelizzoli with a delightful 28th minute chip. Atalanta, level on points with fourth-placed Parma before start of play, have not won in their last five home matches.

BARI 0 NAPOLI 1

Napoli's first win in seven outings came courtesy of a late strike from Czech midfielder Marek Jankulovski. Bari had a goal ruled out for a foul on the keeper in the first half and their young playmaker Antonio Cassano hit the post in injury time.

Bari are bottom and look doomed to relegation, Napoli might still escape.

BRESCIA 1 VERONA 0

Roberto Baggio's third goal in as many matches decided this stormy relegation scrap in wich two players were sent off and seven booked.

Baggio scored with a 22nd minute free kick before Verona's Mauro Camoranesi was dismissed for elbowing and Natale Gonnella for a second bookable offence. Brescia looked good enough to escape the drop. Verona are 16th and struggling.

FIORENTINA 2 LECCE 0

Two goals capped an inspired performance from Enrico Chiesa, who took his tally to 16 for the season and four in the past week.

His first came from a free kick which deflected off the wall and his second with a bullet of a shot which beat the keeper at the near post. Lecce's fourth consecutive defeat left them in the relegation battle.

ROMA 2 PERUGIA 2

Last-gasp stuff from Roma, whose controversial injury-time equaliser ensured they remained unbeaten at home in the league since March 19 last year.

Television replays suggested Roma's Vincenzo Montella handled the ball during a goalmouth scramble before it richocheted into the net off defender Giovanni Tedesco. Davide Baiocco put Perugia ahead and a terrible blunder from Roma keeper Francesco Antonioli handed them their second.

JUVENTUS 3 MILAN 1

After an even first half in which Inzaghi struck the crossbar, Juve took the lead in the 50th minute when Alessio Tacchinardi found himself in space on the edge of the area and fired past Inter 'keeper Sebastien Frey.

Four minutes later Juve doubled their lead when Inzaghi lost his marker Matteo Ferrari and cut in from the left to beat Frey with a low, angled shot.

The result was put beyond doubt in the 63rd minute when Inter's defence stood and watched an Inzaghi cross reach Del Piero and the Juve captain drove home, with the help of a deflection off Inter defender Laurent Blanc.

VICENZA 4 BOLOGNA 2

Sierra Leone's Mohammed Kallon grabbed two goals in an action-packed tie. Vicenza were 3-0 up and coasting against 10-man Bologna, who then pulled two goals back. Kallon's second sealed Vicenza's valuable three points.

Luca Toni, scorer of Vicenza's opener, had another effort disallowed and replays suggested two of Vicenza's goals might have been offside.

Bologna midfielder Marcello Castellini was sent off in the 56th minute.

AC MILAN 3 UDINESE 0

Georgian defnder Kakha Kaladze scored a scrappy opener for Milan but their other two goals were pearls.

Brazilian wingback Serginho swept the ball over Udinese keeper Luigi Turci from the corner of the penalty area in the 31st minute before Andriy Shevchenko twisted inside two defenders and fired home a low shot after the break. Milan are unbeaten in six matches and pushing for a Champions League place again.

REGGINA 0 LAZIO 2

Hernan Crespo scored both goals to join Shevchenko at the top of the Serie A scoring lists with 18. His first was a powerful strike into the roof of the Reggina net, his second a delightful chip over the keeper.

Fellow Argentine Diego Simeone set up both. Dino Zoff's side stayed third and their title defence was not over.

Lazio players, Hernan Crespo and Diego Simone celebrate their team's away win over Reggina.

ENGLISH PREMIERSHIP

Arsenal crown Man. Utd champs again!

Manchester United striker, Dwight Yorke (left) about to score one of his two goals agianst Coventry goalkeeper, Chris Kirkland.

Manchester United have been crowned champions of the English premier league for the seventh time in nine seasons after beating Coventry City 4-2 and Arsenal slumped to a stunning 3-0 home defeat at the hands of relegation-threatened Middlesbrough.

Two goals from Dwight Yorke and one each from Ryan Giggs and Paul Scholes gave United the points in an early kick-off at Old Trafford and they then sat back to watch Middlesbrough attempt to win at Highbury for the first time since 1939.

Terry Venables's team did so in the most incredible way as own goals by Arsenal's Brazilian defenders Edu and Silvinho gave the visitors a 2-0 halftime lead and Colombian Hamilton Ricard got a third goal after an hour to end Arsenal's unbeaten home league record in emphatic style.

With five games remaining United have 76 points to the 60 of Arsenal. Ipswich, who beat Newcastle United 1-0 with a Marcus Stewart penalty, move up to third on 56 points, ahead of Leeds United on goal difference.

Ferguson followed the Arsenal game in the Old Trafford directors box and said: "It is a fantastic achievement and I'm very proud of the boys.

"It's always great because it is the hardest league in the world to win. We are very pleased.

"Let's hope this will give us a boost going to Bayern Munich and help us get a result for English football." United face Bayern in the Champions League quarter-final second leg in Munich on Wednesday.

There was no shortage of atmosphere at Old Trafford where Coventry gave their all in an action-packed first half. John Hartson put the visitors ahead after 11 minutes but two good pieces of finishing by Yorke after 13 and 28 minutes gave United the lead only for Hartson to power in a header for 2-2 five minutes later.

United made all the running after the break but 19-year-old goalkeeper Chris Kirkland made a series of good saves as Coventry battled for a point.

The pressure paid off though nine minutes from the end when Giggs looped in a header and Scholes completed the victory with a fierce drive from 25 metres in the 87th minute.

"There's only so much defending you can do, it was like the Alamo in the second half and class told in the end," said Hartson.

Other Matches ... Other Matches ...

ASTON VILLA 2 EVERTON 1

Dion Dublin had Villa ahead after two minutes following good work by Ian Taylor but David Unsworth volleyed Everton level in the 21st minute.

Taylor then glanced home a cross from David Ginola, one of three substitutes, to maintain Villa's outside chance of a UEFA Cup place.

CHELSEA 1 SOUTHAMPTON 0

Gustavo Poyet converted an excellent Mario Melchiot cross two minutes before halftime for a deserved win that lifted Chelsea to fifth.

IPSWICH TOWN 1 NEWCASTLE UTD 0

Carl Cort had a first half goal ruled out for pushing as Newcastle matched their high-flying hosts for much of the game.

But the match turned in the 75th minute when Nolberto Solano handballed Heidar Hreidarssonn's shot on the line.

The Peruvian was sent off, Marcus Stuart converted the penalty, and Ipswich were back to third in the league.

LEICESTER CITY 1 MAN. CITY 2

A desperately needed victory for struggling Manchester City in a scrappy match.

Shaun Goater bundled Manchester City ahead after 17 minutes but Ade Akimbyi slid in the equaliser just before halftime.

Leicester defender Gerry Taggart thumped a header against his own bar after an hour but seven minutes later Paolo Wanchope back-heeled Manchester City into the lead to inflict Leicester's fifth successive defeat.

BRADFORD CITY 2 ATHLETIC 0

Bradford's first win since January 1 came courtesy of a Robbie Blake penalty in the 72nd minute and Benito Carbone's fine lobbed volley eight minutes later.

SUNDERLAND 2 HOTSPUR 3

A great comeback by Spurs, who trailed 2-0 after being outplayed in the first half.

Kevin Kilbane had Sunderland ahead from close range after three minutes and Niall Quinn tapped in the second after Stefan Schwarz's free kick had been blocked nine minutes later.

But Stephen Clemence pulled one back eight minutes after the break, Gary Doherty broke clear to equalise 15 minutes from time and Doherty seized on defensive confusion to smack home his second and give Spurs a surprise win.

WEST HAM UTD 3 DERBY COUNTY 1

West Ham produced their best performance for weeks to ensure their own safety and leave Derby still very much in danger.

Frederic Kanoute scored fortuitous first after five minutes and Frank Lampard smashed in a second two minutes later.

West Ham, who had picked up just one point in their previous six matches, were rampant and Joe Cole made it three after a great combination with Paolo Di Canio on the break.

Thordur Gudjonsson pulled one back late on for Derby who are now just one place above the drop zone.

Arsenal midfielder, Fredrik Ljunjberg (left) battles with Middlesbrough captain, Paul Ince.

	P	W	L	D	F	A	PTS
1. Manchester Utd (champions)	33	23	7	3	74	24	76
2. Arsenal	33	17	9	7	53	32	60
3. Ipswich Town	33	17	5	11	49	37	56
4. Leeds United	33	16	8	9	50	39	56
5. Chelsea	32	14	9	9	59	38	51
6. Liverpool	31	14	8	9	52	34	50
7. Sunderland	33	13	10	10	39	35	49
8. Aston Villa	33	12	12	9	40	35	48
9. Tottenham	33	12	9	12	41	43	45
10. Charlton	33	12	9	12	42	46	45
11. Leicester City	33	13	6	14	34	40	45
12. Southampton	32	12	8	12	34	40	44
13. West Ham	33	9	12	12	40	43	39
14. Newcastle	31	11	6	14	36	44	39
15. Everton	33	10	8	15	37	47	38
16. Middlesbrough	33	7	14	12	37	38	35
17. Derby County	33	8	11	14	32	54	35
18. Manchester	34	7	9	18	37	60	30
19. Coventry	33	7	9	17	33	56	30
20. Bradford	32	4	9	19	25	59	21

LIVERPOOL 1 LEEDS UNITED 2

Rio Ferdinand gave Leeds the perfect start when he headed in a fourth minute corner.

Lee Bowyer made it 2-0 after 33 minutes after good work by Harry Kewell. Liverpool hit back when Steven Gerrard side-footed home Michael Owen's cross 10 minutes after the interval but he was sent off for a second yellow card in the 70th minute. Mark Viduka could have had a hat-trick as Leeds finished well on top.

Murphy's Law

Dear Readers,

Your regular column Murphy's Law will hence forth not feature on this page any longer. This is due to editorial changes. We regret the sad development.

Thanks.

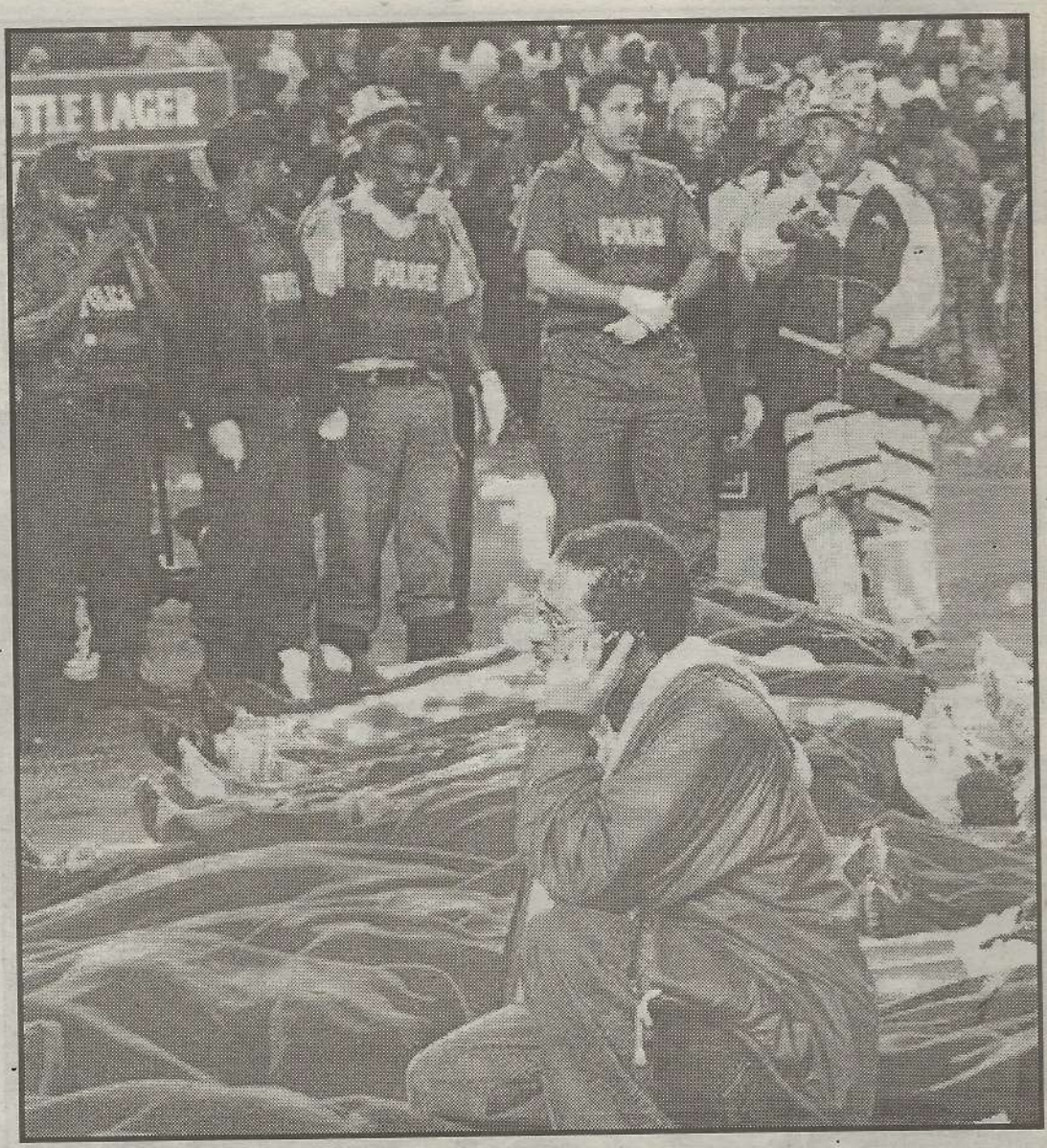
WORLD

FIFA
World Rankings

(Valid until May 10)

			=68	Bosnia-Herz		138	Tahiti	285
1	Brazil	807	499			139	Ethiopia	279
2	France	792	70	Bolivia	498	140	Tajikistan	277
3	Argentina	770	71	Burkina Faso	491	141	Luxemburg	265
4	Italy	750	72	Macedonia FYR	490	142	Bangladesh	261
5	Portugal	735	73	Congo DR	486	143	Tanzania	256
6	Czech Rep.	732	74	Uzbekistan	485	144	Andorra	252
7	Spain	725	75	Liberia	482	=145	Liechtenstein	249
8	Germany	714	76	Algeria	478	=145	Korea DPR	249
9	Paraguay	713	77	**AUSTRALIA**	476	147	Antigua and Bar.	248
10	Netherlands	709	78	Albania	473	148	Palestine	245
11	Yugoslavia	697	=79	China PR	472	149	St Kitts & Nevis	242
12	Romania	688	=79	Guinea	472	149	Benin	242
13	Mexico	681	=81	Senegal	470	151	Botswana	240
14	England	677	=81	Qatar	470	152	Maldives	239
15	Colombia	667	=81	Cuba	470	153	Sri Lanka	234
16	Norway	666	84	Togo	468	154	Dominica	220
17	Croatia	665	85	Iraq	467	155	Bermuda	216
18	United States	659	86	Namibia	465	156	Gambia	214
19	Sweden	645	87	Lithuania	462	=157	Dominican Rep	208
20	Russia	642	88	Belarus	454	=157	Cape Verde Is.	208
21	Denmark	641	89	El Salvador		159	Eritrea	195
22	South Africa	630	90	Haiti	452	160	Cayman Islands	191
23	Poland	627	91	Gabon	449	161	Yemen	190
=23	Scotland	627	92	Congo	448	162	Kyrgyzstan	188
=23	Slovakia	627	93	Armenia	447	163	British Virgin Is.	186
26	Turkey	620	94	Latvia	445	164	Mauritania	185
27	Belgium	619	95	New Zealand	444	165	Chinese Taipei	183
28	Chile	617	96	Indonesia	441	166	San Marino	175
29	Saudi Arabia		97	Vietnam SR	437	167	Chad	173
=30	Ireland Republic	611	98	Northern Ireland	430	168	Surinam	170
=30	Morocco	611	99	Moldova	424	169	Laos	168
32	Tunisia	607	100	Oman	422	170	Nepal	
33	Trinidad &		101	Kenya	417	171	Vanuatu	162
	Tobago	596	102	Mali	416	172	Cambodia	158
34	Egypt	589	103	Singapore	409	173	Cook Islands	156
35	Ukraine	588	104	Syria	407	174	Samoa	139
36	Slovenia	587	105	Malaysia	405	175	Netherlands	
=37	Austria	586	106	Uganda	404		Antilles	132
=37	Cameroon	586	107	Barbados	402	176	Central	
39	Uruguay	583	=108	Wales	399		African Rep.	127
40	Iran	581	=108	Jordan	399	177	Guinea-Bissau	123
41	Korea Republic	578	110	Lebanon	381	=178	Tonga	121
42	Japan	572	111	Libya	378	=178	Guyana	121
43	Israel	571	=112	Mozambique	375	180	Bahamas	115
44	Bulgaria	570	=112	Venezuela	375	=181	Philippines	114
45	Jamaica	567	114	Azerbaijan	369	=181	Sao Tome e	
46	Greece	564	115	Faroe Islands	364		Principe	114
47	Cote d' Ivoire	561	116	Bahrain	361	=181	Macao	114
48	Hungary	559	117	Madagascar	357	184	Niger	104
49	Honduras	557	118	Malawi	355	185	Aruba	99
50	Peru	554	119	Mauritius	343	186	Belize	92
51	Ecuador	553	120	Sudan	333	187	Equatorial Guinea	90
52	Costa Rica	552	121	India	332	188	Seychelles	82
53	Angola	549	=122	Malta	319	189	Mongolia	81
54	Zambia	548	=122	Hong Kong	319	190	Djibouti	79
55	Nigeria	545	124	Kazakhstan	318	191	Pakistan	71
56	Switzerland	540	125	Panama	317	192	Nicaragua	70
57	Iceland	537	126	St Vincent/Gr	311	193	Anguilla	65
58	Finland	529	127	Lesotho	304	194	PNG	64
59	Guatemala	528	=128	Burundi	303	195	Brunei Dar.	63
60	Ghana	525	=128	Swaziland	303	196	Somalia	59
61	Thailand	519	130	Myanmar	302	197	Puerto Rico	52
=62	Cyprus	514	131	Turkmenistan	300	198	US Virgin Islands	33
=62	Zimbabwe	514	132	Rwanda	298	199	Guam	28
64	Estonia	511	133	Fiji	297	200	Turks and	
65	Canada	506	134	St Lucia	295		Caicos Is.	22
66	UAE	504	=135	Sierra Leone	289	201	Bhutan	14
67	Kuwait	503	=135	Grenada	289	202	Montserrat	11
=68	Georgia	499	137	Solomon Isl.	287	203	American Samoa	8

***Note:** Teams inactive since 1991 and teams which have not played yet do not appear in the table.*



Paramedics and first-aid workers stand alongside the corpses of dead spectators at Ellis Park, South Africa, last week.

Tragedies which shook Soccer

Last Sunday marked the 12th anniversary of the tragic Hillsborough Stadium Disaster in England.BBC Sports thus documented other soccer incidents which claimed the lives of hundreds of supporters around the world.

9 March 1946
Bolton Wanderers v Stoke City

Tragedy hits an FA Cup tie between Bolton and Stoke when a wall supporting fans collapses at Burden Park.

The collapse crushes spectators and sparks a stampede which kills 33 people and injures more than 400.

24 May 1964
Peru v Argentina

The fierce South American rivalry unfortunately moved from the football pitch into the stands when Argentina beat Peru in Lima in an Olympic qualifying match.

The crowd became incensed when the referee disallowed a Peruvian goal two minutes from time, sparking outrage amongst the fans in the National Stadium.

Their protests soon turned into a full-blown riot and 318 people were killed in the ensuing violence, with more than 500 major injuries.

23 June 1968
River Plate v Boca Juniors

Seventy four people are killed and more than 150 are injured when spectators mistakenly headed towards a closed exit after a first division match in Buenos Aires.

The fans at the front of the melee are crushed to death against the doors by other fans unaware of the closed passageway at the back.

2 January 1971
Celtic v Rangers

The Old Firm derby attracted enormous crowds and this game at Ibrox Stadium was no different.

The match was heading for a goalless draw until Celtic scored with a minute to go, prompting a mass exodus of disappointed Rangers fans.

Although Colin Stein scored for Rangers in the last minute for 1-1 draw, many Rangers supporters were still on their way out.

The momentum of the crowd meant that once people started to fall, there was no way of holding the mass of bodies back and 66 people lost their lives, with another 140 suffering injuries.

20 October 1982
Spartak Moscow v Haarlem

Three hundred and forty people were reportedly killed during a European Cup match in Moscow.

Police were blamed for the incident because they were said to have forced fans down a narrow, icy staircase before the end of the match.

But when a late goal was scored, exiting fans tred to re-enter the stadium, crushing the people caught in the middle.

Russians officials attempted to claim the official casualty loss was only 61 and the police were not responsible for the disaster.

11 May 1985
Bradford City v Lincoln City

A stray lit cigarette stub ignited a wooden terrace section at Valley Parade.Fire soon engulfed the stand, causing 56 people to lose their lives in one of the worst tragedies in English football.

29 May 1985
Juventus v Liverpool

Trouble began when fights broke out between rival English and Italian supporters at the European Cup final at the Heysel Stadium in Brussels.

Police repeatedly clashed with fans, but when a wall separating the two sets of fans collapsed, a riot ensued, taking the lives of 39 spectators.

12 March 1988
Kathmandu, Nepal

At least 93 people were killed and 100 more were injured when fans attempted to flee from a hailstorm inside the stadium.

But they could not escape because the stadium doors are locked, causing a fatal crush at the front.

15 April 1989
Liverpool v Nottingham Forest

The worst tragedy in English football happened during an FA Cup semi-final at the Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield, killing 96 people.

Police, worried about the number of Liverpool fans outside the ground, opened one of the main gates which resulted in a huge number of fans entering the Leppings Lane end.

The sudden surge crushed many Liverpool fans against the riot fencing which surrounded around the ground.

16 October 1996
Guatemala v Costa Rica

Eighty four people died and more than 150 others were injured during a stampede at an all-Central American clash in Guatemala City.

WORLD

WORLD RESULTS ... WORLD RESULTS ...

FRENCH CHAMPIONNAT

NANTES STAY ON TOP

Nantes stayed on track for their first French first division title for six years when they struggled to a 1-0 win at home to Bastia thanks to a first-half goal from Olivier Monterrubio.

Nantes had Argentine defender Nestor Fabbri sent off in the 57th minute for a foul on striker Frederic Nee, but goalkeeper Michael Landreau saved the home side when he dived to stop Pierre-Yves Andre's penalty.

The Canaries now lead second-placed Lille by five points with three matches left to play.

Sonny Anderson and Steve Marlet grabbed a goal apiece as Olympique Lyon beat Paris St Germain 2-0 to keep alive their hopes of a first French league title.

Brazilian Anderson scored his 18th league goal of the season just before halftime and Marlet netted his 10th after coming on as a substitute.

The win lifted Lyon into second place in the title race, four points behind leaders Nantes with three rounds of matches remaining.

Nantes have 59 points, with Lyon and Lille on 55 and Bordeaux on 53. Lyon are ahead of Lille because of a superior goal difference and those clubs face each other in two weeks' time.

Mop-haired midfielder Monterrubio put Nantes ahead in the 27th minute. He floated a free-kick into the area and Bastia goalkeeper Eric Durand collided with striker Viorel Moldovan.

The ball floated into the net to give Monterrubio his 10th goal of the season.

Nantes had to work hard for their win with goalkeeper Landreau making two acrobatic first-half saves to keep out shots from Yann Lachuer and Pierre-Yves Andre and another fine block to deny Lachuer early in the second half.

The goalkeeper, who saved two penalties in a cup win over Auxerre two weeks ago, preserved the three points for Nantes in the dying minutes with a save from a Nee header.

Auxerre also had a late goal from Andre ruled out for offside and survived again when defender Nicolas Gillet cleared off the line after a goalmouth scramble.

Nantes got back on the winning track after losing 3-2 to title rivals Olympique Lyon in the semi-finals of the League Cup in midweek and are still in line for a domestic double.

Raynald Denoueix's side face Strasbourg in the French Cup semi-final on April 20 as they continue their bid to become only the third side to lift the cup three years in succession.

PSG stretched Lyon but were wasteful in front of goal, while the home side took their chances.

Anderson opened the scoring when he beat the offside trap and clipped the ball over goalkeeper Lionel Letizi, while Marlet made it 2-0 with 10 minutes left when he netted from close range after an Anderson cross.

Marseille's Liberian-born striker, George Weah in action against Sedan.

Olympique Lyon 2 Paris St Germain 0, Nantes 1 Bastia 0, AJ Auxerre 1 Lille 1, Girondins Bordeaux 2 Strasbourg 1, En Avant Guingamp 1 Metz 3, Monaco 5 St Etienne 3, Olympique Marseille 2 Sedan 1, Toulouse 2 Stade Renne 0, RC Lens v Troyes - postponed.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Nantes	**31**	**18**	**5**	**8**	**52**	**35**	**59**
2. Olympique Lyon	31	14	13	4	46	26	55
3. Lille	31	15	10	6	38	22	55
4. Girondins Bordeaux	31	14	11	6	44	28	53
5. Sedan	31	13	9	9	42	35	48
6. Stade Rennes	31	13	6	12	41	33	45
7. Troyes	30	11	10	9	42	43	43
8. Guingamp	31	11	9	11	37	43	42
9. Monaco	31	12	5	14	51	47	41
10. AJ Auxerre	31	11	8	12	31	38	41
11. Bastia	31	11	6	14	37	38	39
12. Paris St Germain	31	11	6	14	39	41	39
13. RC Lens	30	9	10	11	34	33	37
14. Metz	31	9	10	12	33	42	37
15. Marseille	31	10	6	15	28	37	36
16. St Etienne	31	9	8	14	40	52	28
17. Toulouse	31	6	10	15	28	42	28
18. Strasbourg	31	6	8	17	26	54	26

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

SCHALKE EDGE PAST BAYERN

Danish striker Ebbe Sand hit a hat-trick for Schalke 04 in their 3-1 win over Bayern Munich to go top of the Bundesliga.

The Gelsenkirchen club, chasing their first German title since 1958, moved two points clear of deposed leaders Bayern, who are now second with five games remaining.

Defending champions Bayern, who play Manchester United in Munich on Wednesday in the second leg of their Champions League quarter-final, went ahead after three minutes at the Olympic Stadium through Carsten Jancker.

But Schalke, who had not beaten Bayern in Munich since a 1-0 victory in 1983, equalised 11 minutes later when Sand scored from close range after being set up by Emile Mpenza.

The two combined again in the 48th minute with Sand collecting a headed pass from Mpenza to make it 2-1.

Sand, now the Bundesliga's top scorer with 20 goals, sealed victory on 75 minutes, pouncing after Bayern goalkeeper

Ebbe Sands, celebrating one of his hat-trick goals against Bayern Munich.

Oliver Kahn failed to block an effort from Mpenza.

Bayern had four players suspended for the top-of-the-table match, including captain Stefan Effenberg whose creative skills were sorely missed.

But they could take some consolation from the performance of rivals Bayer Leverkusen, who stay in third place after slumping to a 3-1 defeat at home to modest SC Freiburg.

Freiburg went ahead through defender Daniel Schumann in the 11th minute, but Brazilian midfielder Ze Roberto equalised five minutes into the second half.

The home side then wasted several chances before two late goals from midfielders Zoubaier Baya and Vladimir But gave Freiburg victory.

Leverkusen were one of four teams on 49 points with Borussia Dortmund, Hertha Berlin and Kaiserslautern, all still in contention for the title in a race wich remains wide open.

Hertha kept alive their hopes with a 1-0 win over Dortmund in Saturday's late match.

Germany defender Marko Rehmer headed the winner in the 65th minute and Hertha held on to their lead despite having Hungarian midfielder Pal Dardai sent off for a second bookable offence in the 74th minute.

Dortmund stay fourth but are now ahead of fifth-placed Hertha only on goal difference.

Sixth-placed Kaiserslautern also stayed in the hunt by using two goals from Czech striker Vratislav Lokvenc for a 4-2 victory over strugglers Eintracht Frankfurt.

Unterhaching 1 Hansa Rostock 1, Hamburg SV 1 Cologne 1, VfL Wolfsburg 0 TSV 1860 Munich 1, Kaiserslautern 4 Eintracht Frankfurt 2, Bayern Munich 1 Schalke 04 3, VfL Bochum 1 Werder Bremen 2, Bayer Leverkusen 1 SC Freiburg 3, Hertha Berlin 1 Borussia Dortmund 0, VfB Stuttgart 1 Energie Cottbus 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Schalke 04	**29**	**15**	**7**	**7**	**54**	**28**	**52**
2. Bayern Munich	29	15	5	9	55	35	50
3. Bayer Leverkusen	29	15	4	10	50	37	49
4. Borussia Dortmund	29	14	7	8	49	37	49
5. Hertha Berlin	29	16	1	12	52	47	49
6. Kaiserslautern	29	15	4	10	45	44	49
7. Werder Bremen	29	13	7	9	44	42	46
8. SC Freiburg	29	11	10	8	41	32	43
9. Cologne	29	11	9	9	49	41	42
10. VfL Wolfsburg	29	10	10	9	51	36	40
11. 1860 Munich	29	10	7	12	36	49	37
12. Hansa Rostock	29	10	6	13	30	41	36
13. Hamburg SV	29	9	8	12	51	50	35
14. VfB Stuttgart	29	7	10	12	37	44	31
15. Unterhaching	29	7	10	12	28	47	31
16. Energie Cottbus	29	9	3	17	32	45	30
17. Frankfurt	29	8	5	16	36	59	29
18. VfL Bochum	29	7	5	17	28	54	26

PRIMERA LIGA

MADRID SOAR AWAY

A superbly-taken hat-trick by Guti and a marvellous swerving free kick from Roberto Carlos gave Real Madrid a comfortable 4-0 win over Villarreal in the Spanish First Division.

Real maintained their eight-point lead as second-placed Deportivo Coruna squeezed out a 2-1 win over relegation strugglers Osasuna.

Third-placed Valencia lost ground after falling victim to in-form Alaves who grabbed a rare 2-1 victory at the Mestalla stadium.

A last-minute Rivaldo free kick enabled Barcelona to salvage a 4-4 draw in a pulsating home clash with Real Zaragoza.

It was the second week running that Barcelona had been involved in an eight-goal thriller.

Real lead on 65 points, Deportivo follow with 57 and Valencia stayed third on 52, a point ahead of Barcelona.

Real survived an early fright as their attack-minded visitors, marshalled by the impressive Jorge Lopez, pushed forward.

On seven minutes, a Lopez cross prised open the Real defence and Martin Palermo fired a shot against the post. A minute later Lopez skipped past Fernando Hierro and forced a fine reflex save from Iker Casillas.

But Real were shocked into action and Guti, leading the Real attack in the absence of Raul and Fernando Morientes, forced a sharp save from Javier Lopez Vallejo in the 11th minute.

The packed Bernabeu stadium was then brought to its feet by a spectacular goal from Guti on 21 minutes.

Roberto Carlos stormed into space on the left and then swept a curling cross into the edge of the area. The advancing Guti sent the ball spinning into the corner of the net with a superb looping volley.

Real proceeded to take control of the game, depriving Villarreal of possession and leaving Palermo isolated up front.

Guti added his second and his 11th goal of the season five minutes after the break. Luis Figo threaded a neat pass through to Steve McManaman whose square ball left Guti with a simple tap in.

Barcelona, who came back from three goals down against Villarreal last week, staged another remarkable recovery in a dazzling clash with Zaragoza at the Nou Camp.

Well-taken goals from Juan Eduardo Esnaider and Paulo Jamelli gave the visitors a 2-0 lead into the break. But Marc Overmars pulled a goal back eight minutes into the second half as he fired home a Philip Cocu pass.

The sides then exchanged four goals in a frenetic eight minutes – Jose Ignacio and Esnaider scoring with long shots for the visitors and Patrick Kluivert notching a classy double for Barcelona.

Once more it was Rivaldo who saved the day for Llorenc Serra Ferrer's side as he sent a superb curler into the top corner in the last minute to make it 4-4.

Madrid midfielder, Claude Makelele (right) tackles Villareal striker, Xani Roca.

Athletic Bilbao 0 Espanyol 1, Malaga 1 Rayo Vallecano 1, Numancia 3 Real Sociedad 3, Racing Santander 3 Celta Vigo 0, Real Mallorca 2 Las Palmas 1, Valladolid 1 Real Oviedo 0, Barcelona 4 Real Zaragoza 4, Deportivo Coruna 2 Osasuna 1, Real Madrid 4 Villarreal 0, Valencia 1 Alaves 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Real Madrid	**30**	**20**	**5**	**5**	**66**	**30**	**65**
2. Deportivo Coruna	30	17	6	7	59	36	57
3. Valencia	30	15	7	8	48	25	52
4. Real Mallorca	30	14	10	6	42	35	52
5. Barcelona	30	14	9	7	67	47	51
6. Alaves	30	13	7	10	48	40	46
7. Celta Vigo	30	12	8	10	41	43	44
8. Villarreal	30	12	7	11	44	44	43
9. Malaga	30	12	6	12	48	48	42
10. Espanyol	30	12	6	12	37	32	42
11. Rayo Vallecano	30	9	11	10	50	52	38
12. Real Zaragoza	30	8	12	10	45	46	36
13. Athletic Bilbao	30	9	9	12	37	43	36
14. Valladolid	30	8	11	11	34	39	35
15. Las Palmas	30	10	5	15	30	50	35
16. Real Oviedo	30	9	5	16	38	55	32
17. Real Sociedad	30	7	9	14	36	59	30
18. Racing Santander	30	8	6	16	38	49	30
19. Osasuna	30	6	10	14	33	46	28
20. Numancia	30	7	7	16	30	52	28

WORLD LEAGUES

DUTCH FIRST DIVISION

Vitesse Arnhem 0 PSV Eindhoven 0, Feyenoord 1 Graafschap Doetinchem 2, RBC Roosendaal 1 Sparta Rotterdam 3, RKC Waalwijk 1 Heerenveen 1, AZ Alkmaar 2 Groningen 0, Fortuna Sittard 2 NEC Nijmegen 0. Willem II Tilburg v NAC Breda, Twente Enschede v Utrecht, Roda JC Kerkrade v Ajax Amsterdam.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. PSV Eindhoven	**28**	**20**	**7**	**1**	**57**	**16**	**67**
2. Feyenoord	28	18	2	8	55	28	56
3. Ajax Amsterdam	27	15	5	7	69	32	50
4. Waalwijk	28	13	10	5	38	23	49
5. Roda JC	27	14	6	7	49	32	48
6. Vitesse Arnhem	28	13	8	7	46	38	47
7. Utrecht	26	12	5	9	42	39	41
8. Willem II	27	11	8	8	48	39	41
9. Heerenveen	27	9	11	7	38	32	38
10. NAC Breda	27	10	7	10	33	37	37
11. NEC Nijmegen	28	8	13	7	33	37	37
12. Twente Enschede	27	7	9	11	38	51	30
13. AZ Alkmaar	28	8	6	14	37	52	30
14. Groningen	28	7	7	14	31	43	28
15. Graafschap	28	7	3	18	34	58	24
16. Fortuna Sittard	28	6	6	16	22	49	24
17. Sparta Rotterdam	28	6	5	17	38	60	23
18. RBC Roosendaal	28	4	2	22	34	76	14

BELGIAN FIRST DIVISION

Antwerp 1 La Louviere 1, Charleroi 2 Germinal Beerschot 1, Beveren 0 Club Bruges 2, Westerlo 0 Mechelen 0, Sint-Truiden 1 Eendracht Aalst 0, Harelbeke 2 Ghent 1, Genk 4 Excelsior Mouscron 0, Lierse 1 Lokeren 4, Anderlecht 0 Standard Liege 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Anderlecht	**29**	**20**	**8**	**1**	**73**	**24**	**68**
2. Club Bruges	29	19	9	1	73	23	66
3. Standard Liege	29	14	10	5	64	34	52
4. Ghent	29	14	7	8	51	41	49
5. Beerschot	29	15	3	11	52	40	48
6. Lokeren	29	13	8	8	44	35	47
7. Mouscron	29	13	6	10	55	43	45
8. Westerlo	29	12	8	9	50	44	44
9. Lierse	29	12	6	11	40	37	42
10. Charleroi	29	12	5	12	45	51	41
11. Genk	29	10	7	12	38	39	37
12. Antwerp	29	10	5	14	33	40	35
13. Beveren	29	8	7	14	24	54	31
14. Eendracht Aalst	29	6	7	16	27	57	25
15. Harelbeke	29	7	3	19	32	71	24
16. Sint-Truiden	29	6	6	17	28	47	24
17. La Louviere	29	4	11	14	25	48	23
18. Mechelen	29	4	8	17	35	61	20

PORTUGUESE FIRST DIVISION

Campomaiorense 2 Pacos Ferreira 1, Maritimo 1 Belenenses 2, Alverca 0 Uniao Leiria 1, Gil Vicente 3 Beira Mar 0, Aves 2 Braga 1, Salgueiros 0 Porto 1, Sporting 1 Estrela Amadora 0, Farense 2 Benfica 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Boavista	**27**	**17**	**8**	**2**	**48**	**15**	**59**
2. Porto	27	17	4	6	52	23	55
3. Sporting	28	17	4	7	50	31	55
4. Braga	28	14	9	6	47	35	51
5. Benfica	28	14	7	7	48	31	49
6. Belenenses	28	12	8	8	33	27	44
7. Uniao Leiria	28	11	10	7	34	33	43
8. Beira Mar	28	11	6	11	33	38	39
9. Salgueiros	28	12	3	13	34	41	39
10 Pacos Ferreira	28	9	11	8	35	29	38
11. Farense	28	9	9	10	31	35	36
12. Maritimo	27	9	7	11	26	30	34
13. Alverca	28	9	6	13	36	43	33
14. Gil Vicente	28	7	6	15	25	36	27
15. Vitoria Guimaraes	27	6	8	13	34	44	26
16. Campomaiorense	28	5	11	12	26	46	26
17. Aves	28	3	8	17	21	51	17
18. Estrela Amadora	28	3	5	20	21	46	14

QANTAS
THE SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA

National Soccer League	TOTAL							HOME						AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A
SOUTH MELBOURNE	26	18	5	3	53	19	59	13	10	2	0	32	7	13	7	3	3	21	12
PERTH GLORY	27	16	7	4	66	31	55	14	11	2	1	39	9	13	5	5	3	27	22
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	26	15	7	4	65	35	52	14	9	3	2	40	19	12	6	4	2	25	15
SYDNEY OLYMPIC	26	16	4	6	49	30	52	12	9	2	1	25	10	13	7	2	5	24	20
MARCONI STALLIONS	27	12	7	7	39	32	43	14	7	3	4	24	19	13	5	4	4	15	12
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	27	12	6	9	52	42	42	13	6	4	3	25	17	14	6	2	6	27	25
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE	27	11	7	9	46	47	40	14	5	4	4	29	28	13	6	2	5	17	19
FOOTBALL KINGZ	27	10	7	10	44	42	37	13	6	3	4	22	17	14	4	4	6	20	25
SYDNEY UNITED	27	10	6	11	38	50	36	13	6	4	3	18	20	14	4	2	8	20	33
CANBERRA COSMOS	27	10	4	13	46	44	34	13	5	2	6	26	18	14	5	2	7	21	25
PARRAMATTA POWER	27	10	3	14	37	44	33	14	5	2	7	21	24	13	5	1	7	16	20
NORTHERN SPIRIT	27	8	8	11	35	37	32	13	4	3	6	15	16	13	4	4	5	20	22
BRISBANE STRIKERS	26	8	7	11	47	50	32	13	7	4	2	31	19	14	1	4	9	15	31
NEWCASTLE UNITED	27	7	8	12	31	47	29	14	5	2	7	13	20	13	2	6	5	18	24
EASTERN PRIDE	26	5	5	16	32	49	0*	13	3	5	4	17	18	14	2	0	12	15	29

Matches played against Carlton will result in all teams being awarded a 3-0 win and 3 competition points

*All points deducted due to breach of NSL Regulations — subject to appeal

NORTHERN SPIRIT 0
PARRAMATTA POWER 0

Venue: North Sydney Oval. **Crowd:** 2,104. **Referee:** C. Dionis
Cautions: Noel Spencer (NS) 44, Scott Thomas 53, (NS), Alex Tobin 58 (PP).
Red Card: Scott Thomas (NS) second caution 55.

Teams: NORTHERN SPIRIT: Henderson, Cunico, Howson, Bingley, Spencer, Foster, Thomas, Enes, Burgess (Watkins 70), Perinich (Hunter 76), A Moreira.
PARRAMATTA POWER: Reddy, Barrett, Orlic, Tobin, Elrich (Santalab 70), Blagojevic, Brown, Berry (Brown 75), Thompson, Miller (Eagleton 78), Roodenburg.

PERTH GLORY 1
(Despotovski 23)
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 0

Venue: Perth Oval. **Crowd:** 13,170. **Referee:** S. Micallef
Cautions: B.Maloney (PG) 28, Porter (MK) 46, Kiratzoglou (MK) 48, Acevski (MK) 53, Naven (PG) 82, Rajher (MK) 72), Deans (PG) 93.

Teams: PERTH GLORY: Petkovic, Harnwell, Milicevic, Naven, Maloney (Carbone 69), Despotovski, Wehrman, Junior, Faria, Deans, Mrdja (Buljubasic 88).
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS: Acevski, Vasilevski, R Vargas, Ognenovski, Vukadin, Porter, Kiratzoglou, A Vargas, Da Costa (Pelikaan 85), Marth, Jelic (Rajher 59).

LEADING GOALSCORERS

After Round Twenty-seven

B. DESPOTOVSKI	(Perth Glory)	17
D. MORI	(Perth Glory)	16
S. PETROVSKI	(W'gong Wolves)	15
B. BURGESS	(Northern Spirit)	14
A. THOMPSON	(Marconi/Carlton)	12
S. CHIPPERFIELD	(W'gong Wolves)	12

ADELAIDE CITY FORCE 2
(Pelosi 29, Brain 30)
BRISBANE STRIKERS 2
(Harris 64, 75 pen)

Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium. **Crowd:** 3,400. **Referee:** G. Connolly.
Cautions: Dreger (BS) 11.

Teams: ADELAIDE CITY: Gagalj, Lagati, Kovacevic, Brain, Veart, Tunbridge, Rees, Pantelis, Terminello (M. Karlovic 79) I. Karlovic, Pelosi.
BRISBANE STRIKERS: Duke (Dwyer 46), Dreger, McKain, Wewer (Smeltz 81), Foster (Bell 62), Pilic, McLaren, Davidson, Harris, Hews, Buljan.

FOOTBALL KINGZ 2
(Rufer 33, Perry 47)
CANBERRA COSMOS 3
(Ivanic 9, Aliffi 22, Anthopoulos 85)

Venue: Ericsson Stadium. **Crowd:** 6,941. **Referee:** C. Zetter.
Cautions: Bunce (AK) 36, Lines (AK) 37, Ngata (AK) 46, Angelucci (CC), Arranz (CC) 68, Castro (CC) 74.

Teams: FOOTBALL KINGZ: Cuello, Bunce, Lines, Perry, Rufer, Bluhm, Ibrahim, Ngata (Davis 69), Cartwright (Osman 81), Douglas, Burton (Urlovic 69).
CANBERRA COSMOS: Giannasca, Anthopoulos, Ravanello, Castro, Angelucci, Arranz, Cortes, Hooker, Miyazawa, Aliffi, Ivanic (Popovich 46).

Player Of The Week

BOBBY DESPOTOVSKI: His winning goal against Melbourne Knights placed him atop the NSL goalscorers' chart.

Eastern Pride vs Wollongong Wolves (Postponed indefinitely)

Sydney Olympic vs South Melbourne (To be Played Wednesday, April 18)

SYDNEY UNITED 0
NEWCASTLE UNITED 3
(Buonavoglia 34pen, 86, Tsekenis 51st)

Venue: Sydney United SC. **Crowd:** 2,638. **Referee:** M. Breeze.

Teams: SYDNEY UNITED: Hughes, Olic, Mark, Bosnar, Palapanis (Clowes 46), Arrarte (Rastall 66), Deur, Pondeljak, Talevski, Awantele (Arambasic 60), Menapi.
NEWCASTLE UNITED: Catlin, Roberts, Zoricich, McManus, Sprod, Dodd (Harper 60), Buonavoglia, Tsekenis, Trpcevski, McBreen, Juchniewicz (Wilson 33).

ROUND 28

SUNDAY APRIL 29

Melbourne Knights	vs	Newcastle United
Brisbane Strikers	vs	Marconi Stallions
Canberra Cosmos	vs	Perth Glory
Wollongong Wolves	vs	Adelaide City Force
South Melbourne	vs	Northern Spirit
Sydney United	vs	Football Kingz
Sydney Olympic	vs	Eastern Pride

Parramatta Power - bye

MARCONI STALLIONS BYE